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THE
GREAT MISNOMER,
THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL.

A DISSERTATION

BY

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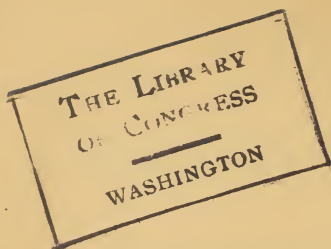
AUTHOR OF "DUTIES OF PASTORS TO CHURCHES," "ORIGIN AND
CONTINUITY OF THE BAPTISTS," ETC.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."—ISAIAH.



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TO ONE who is gone, and to ONE who is now with me—in grateful memory and recognition of the sweetest sympathy and the most effective help—this little work is lovingly inscribed; hoping that their God and mine will graciously accept and bless it, as an honest and earnest, however slight, contribution to His Cause.

T. G. J.

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I.

AN AXIOM.

AMES should be, so far as is possible, significant of the things named. They should express, represent, describe, define them. Not more naturally, than logically, in the beginning of language, did the first names do this. All appreciate the importance of rightly naming substances and their properties, in the physical world; and of also properly naming—by the employment of appropriate terms—thoughts, ideas, facts, principles, in the mental realm. The name should neither signify *too much*, nor

too little. Above all, it should not signify any thing *different* from the thing named. Upon this *dictum*—we may call it *axiom*—depend the justness of all science, the soundness of all philosophy, the progress and stability of all knowledge. Nay, intimately connected with it are all right conduct, pure morality, true religion. Disregard it, and falsehood takes the place of truth; vice, the place of virtue; discord and confusion, the place of harmony and order.



II.

DEFINITION OF COMMUNION.

TO the blessed Supper of our Lord, many different appellations have been given. It were tedious and unprofitable to mention them. The most striking of these, however, and that most generally used among the Protestant churches, and non-Romish, (as the Baptist,) is the sweet-sounding and beautiful one, "*Communion*." What is its meaning?

TO COMMUNE, is—*to converse, talk together familiarly, impart sentiments mutually; to have intercourse in contemplation or meditation.* COMMUNION, is—*fellowship, concord, agreement, intercourse between persons; interchange of thought, feeling, and good offices; giving and receiving.* As used, ecclesiastically, to express *joint participation of the Lord's Supper*, and, by metonymy, *the Lord's Supper itself*, it is regarded

as a *pledge of mutual confidence, a demonstration of mutual fraternal love*, by those who together celebrate the sacred feast.



III.

SIGNIFICATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WHAT is the Lord's Supper? What are its essential character and grand design? The brief words of Jesus at its institution, and of Paul subsequently, clearly show the nature and design of the holy rite, and sufficiently define it. "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: *this do in remembrance of me*: Likewise also, the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."¹ "The Lord Jesus," says Paul, "the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: *this do in remembrance of me*.

Luke xxii., 19-20.

After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: *this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."¹

Simple, yet sublime, rite! Full of divine beauty and significance! "Nothing could have been more properly chosen, to signify the efficacy of our Saviour's atonement in giving life and joy to our souls, than bread, the staff of life, and wine, the exhilarating and strengthening quality of which was expressed in an ancient parable, where it is said 'to cheer God and men.'"²

¹ 1 Cor. xi., 23-26.

² Dick's Lectures on Theology, vol. 2, p. 356.

IV.

APPLICATION OF THE AXIOM.

NOW, in the light of the foregoing definition of the term *Communion*, and of the inspired statement of the signification of the *sacred Supper*, applying the axiom laid down at the commencement of this discussion, we inquire,—Is the former, the proper appellation of the latter?

This famous theological and ecclesiastical name, sounding and resounding every where, pronounced with sympathy and love and deepest reverence by every tongue, is very beautiful. It is beautiful in Greek—*Κοινωνία*; beautiful in Latin—*Communio*; not less beautiful in English—*Communion*. Admired and revered it was by the Greeks, and equally by the Romans. Admired and revered it is, too, by every Anglo-Saxon heart. And yet

that name, as widely applied by the later Greek and Roman, by their successors, by the whole English-speaking people of the world, and by others—however beautiful and sweet-sounding, however in itself significant—is a false name, *a misnomer*. As we at once perceive, and shall yet more fully see, it cannot bear the axiomatic test proposed. It is not significant of the thing named. It does not properly represent or define it. It expresses both *too much* and *too little*. It not only signifies something *different* from the main idea of the rite to which it is applied, but it *obscures*, instead of *illustrating*, that idea.



V.

A PURELY MEMORIAL ORDINANCE.

FROM those declarations of our Lord, and of his apostles, which we have quoted in a preceding section, it is clear that the holy Supper was designed to be a purely *memorial ordinance*. It is a feast in *commemoration of Christ*, not a feast of *communion with each other*, on the part of those who participate in it. This is both *theologically* and *practically* a distinction of much moment. For the apostles to have regarded the Supper as a feast of fellowship and communion among themselves, rather than of commemoration of the dying love of Christ, would have been deeply to disparage and dishonor their Lord. It would have been to put themselves before and above him. This had been the grossest and most selfish perversion. But at such a time, and by such men, in the immediate

presence of their adored Lord, whose eye was dimmed, whose head was bowed, whose breast was heaving with anguish, at the immediate prospect of being taken from them, by a violent and bloody death, such an unnatural and monstrous perversion would have been altogether impossible. Thinking only of Christ, they forgot themselves.


When, therefore, any of the professed followers of Jesus, make the sacred Supper *a boasted feast of fellowship and mutual communion*, rather than of *commemoration of their dying Lord*, they are guilty of the perversion which we have said was impossible to the high-hearted and generous men, inflexibly faithful to Christ and his cause, who first observed the blessed rite. When, too, they make its *joint observance* an *ultimate test* of Christian recognition and fellowship between professed believers, they are guilty of a deeper perversion still. Yet more do they violate the high and holy design of this heavenly rite--this rite of pure, disinterested love--when they prostitute it to the unworthy purposes of *a carnal and selfish partizanship*. The Supper of our Lord was instituted

for no such purposes as these, and cannot subserve them, without utter disregard of its grand design, and violence to its whole spirit.



VI.

COMMUNION BETWEEN BELIEVERS.

OT having been primarily instituted to effect personal communion between those who observe it, this sacred rite has no *peculiar* or *special adaptation* to such an end. In fact, it does not effect it at all, except *incidentally*, and *in subordination to its main design*. As we have already intimated, there is no reason to believe that Peter, and James, and John, or any of the other apostles, had any personal and vividly conscious communion with each other, when they first partook of the sacred Supper. Certainly, it is not to be believed that the loyal eleven had any real fellowship or communion with the traitor, Judas; if indeed, as is doubtful, he participated with them in the observance of the rite. Communion between believers, is an active, intelligent, and

voluntary exercise of the soul; a matter of mental and spiritual consciousness. But, at the Lord's Supper, one may not, for obvious reasons, at all think of his fellow-participant. He may not even be aware of his presence in the house of the Lord. They may occupy positions widely apart, or, if they sit side by side, they may have no acquaintance, congeniality, or personal sympathy, with each other.

No reason is there, then, drawn either from the word of God, or from the nature and fitness of things, as we shall yet more fully see, in the course of our discussion, for regarding the Supper of the Lord, as a rite of mutual communion, a pledge of fellowship, and demonstration of fraternal love and confidence, among those who together celebrate it—though, as we freely admit, there may be, in individual instances, and doubtless often is, a sweet and beautiful communion of heart with heart, *as in all other acts of united spiritual service*. Of such communion, however, there is unquestionably far more, in social prayer and praise, in loving converse and companionship,

in a thousand acts of united work and worship, among those who, *upon principle*, never sit down together at the sacred board, than is ordinarily enjoyed at that board itself, by those, even, whose views are in full accord respecting its character and requisitions. Certainly, infinitely more of such communion between God's people is there, in the social and fraternal exercises which we have mentioned, than they could possibly enjoy, if, *compromising conscience*, and *sacrificing principle*, they were together to partake of the Supper of the Lord.

“In former ages of the church, that is, from the close of the second century downward, until heathenism was obliterated, it was generally, but erroneously supposed, by almost all, that Christian fellowship, or communion, consisted chiefly in *praying together*. Christians would never unite in saying ‘Our Father who art in heaven.’ would not even pray in the same house of worship, with those whom they did not consider orthodox Christians. Heathens, unbelievers, heretics, persons suspended or excommunicated; even catechumens, or can-

didates for baptism, and members of other sects, were admitted to hear the psalmody, and reading of the scriptures, and the discourses, but were invariably excluded from the building, before the prayers of the church were offered. Our views of prayer are much more just than these.”¹

So far from there being, in the language which we have quoted from the scriptures respecting the institution, nature, and design of the Lord’s Supper, or in that of any New Testament writer concerning it, anything to warrant our regarding it as the rite of mutual communion among those who partake of it together, there is nothing to suggest such a conception of the holy ordinance.

And as there is nothing in the language of Christ, when he instituted the Supper, nor in that of any of the New Testament writers respecting it, to justify the designation of it, in this sense, as THE COMMUNION, so is there nothing to sanction it, in the language employed, when *the passover*, which prefigured the Christian

¹Curtis on Communion, pp. 80-81.

ordinance, was appointed. In instituting that ancient Jewish rite, God said, "And this day shall be unto you for a *memorial*; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by ordinance forever."¹ Not the slightest intimation have we here, or elsewhere, that the pass-over was to be observed as a feast of communion by the Israelites—a feast of mutual recognition and fellowship—or that they ever celebrated it as such. Presumptive evidence of great value, certainly this is, that *the Christian passover*, the Supper of the Lord, to which the former feast constantly referred, and in which it has been merged, is to be regarded as a rite, not of *communion*, but of *commemoration*.

¹Ex. xi., 14.

VII.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

PART I.

THE only passage in the Bible, which might seem, in any degree, to favor the naming of the Lord's Supper, "the Communion," is that in which the apostle, writing to the Corinthians, twice, in close connection, employs that term, (*κοινωνία*.) He says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion*, (*κοινωνία*), of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *communion*, (*κοινωνία*), of the body of Christ?"¹ But this passage, in which the word is used in argument upon another subject, for the purpose of illustration, and we think without the slightest intention of giving name to the Sup-

¹ 1 Cor. x., 16.

per—as it was never before, or afterwards, employed by its author, or other inspired writer, in connection with it—by no means warrants the fixed and universal designation in question.

If such an employment of a term, be enough to fix a name upon that to which it is applied, then is there much more reason for calling the *contributions* for the poor, (as, indeed, they were, for some time, often called,) as well as other acts of *Christian benevolence*, “the *Communion*, than for so calling the Lord’s Supper. For the term *κοινωνία*, (*communion*,) is, with its cognates often applied to *them*,¹ while it is used in connection with *that*, only in the single instance which we have mentioned.

Turretine, the celebrated Genevese theologian, while accepting the appellation to which we object, admits that the apostle, in the passage under consideration, did not design to give name to the ordinance. He says, “*Ubi Paulus Coenæ*,” etc.,—“Where Paul does not properly give this name to the Supper; but

¹Rom. xv., 26; 2 Cor. viii., 4; ix., 13; Heb. xiii., 16.; Rom. xii., 13; Gal. vi., 6; Phil. iv., 4.

he explains the nature and end of that mystery, whilst he says, that the sacred symbols are the communion of the body and blood of Christ; that is, are appointed to seal to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ".¹

The language of the Apostle, in the passage specially referred to, simply implies, that participants of the Supper, in receiving the elements symbolic of his body and blood, are brought into intimate spiritual union and fellowship with Christ, being assimilated to his nature, by spiritually partaking, as it were, of the very life and substance of his divine being. The idea of their being joint participants in this union and fellowship with Christ, if at all involved, is still entirely subordinate to the main idea. The communion spoken of by Paul, is communion *with Christ*, in the cup which represents his blood, and in the bread which represents his body—a reception, a *partaking* of him spiritually, in his body and blood. Though believers drink of the cup, and break the bread together, and thus there is a joint participation of them,

¹Turretini Opera, tom. iii., De Sacra Cœna, Quæst xxi. Edinburgh Edition.

this *jointness* of participation, is not a fact which the apostle intends to emphasize. We think it was not at all prominent in his thought, if, indeed, he was distinctly conscious of its presence. The great idea in the apostle's mind, to which, as the whole scope and spirit of his argument shows, he wished to give all possible prominence, was, doubtless, not that persons partaking of the Lord's Supper, had fellowship with each other, but that, *as* they, in partaking of it had fellowship with their divine Lord, *so* persons feasting in heathen temples, had fellowship with their false divinities. He wished strongly to state this fact, and impressively to illustrate it, by a striking and tender allusion to the observance of the Lord's Supper, and thus effectually to guard his brethren against the idolatrous practice, in which some had indulged, and which he so deeply deplored.

In the term *κοινωνία*, as here employed by Paul, the idea of *appropriation*, is essentially involved. Now, participants of the Supper do not appropriate *each other*. But they do appropriate *Christ*, in his body and blood, or rather,

in what his body and blood represent. In the conception of the apostle, then, the fellowship and communion enjoyed by participants in the sacred rite, are fellowship and communion with Christ, with whom they are brought into such close and intimate relations, as that they partake of and appropriate him, spiritually, as one partakes of and appropriates to his own nourishment and support, physically, the meat and drink upon which he feeds. Paul was too nicely analytical and clear a thinker, and too *practically logical*, to so mix and confuse distinct ideas, as, when obviously endeavoring to make prominent, the fact of *communion with Christ*, to introduce, and give prominence to, the *different and diverting idea*, of communion with others.

The renowned Dr. Dick, for many years professor of theology, in Glasgow, after quoting the apostle's language, says, "The *manifest import* of these words, is, that by partaking of the symbols of his body and blood, *we have fellowship with him*, in his atoning sacrifice, and all its precious fruits."¹

¹ Lectures on Theology, vol. 2., p. 396.

The late Dr. Curtis, at one time professor of theology in Howard College, and subsequently in the Lewisburg University, speaking of this celebrated passage, as specially indicating "*communion with Christ*," says, "The apostle was exhorting Christians not to partake of meats offered to idols in their temples. Why? Because the idol was anything, or the meat offered to idols capable of communicating spiritual taint or infection? No, but because, by partaking, they would seem as if seeking and symbolizing a spiritual communion with the idols, by giving the accustomed token of so doing. This he illustrates in vs. 18—'Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?' As if he had said, do not they who eat together of the sacrifices offered to Jehovah, betoken to the world their joint worship of the God of Israel? In vs. 16, 17, he similarly illustrates his argument, by the Lord's Supper; 'the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?' Is it not a token by which we show to the

world our communion with Jesus? that we are partakers of the precious fruits of his death for our sins?' The bread that we break, is it not a token that we are not ashamed to be considered as having imbibed the principles and spirit of the Crucified One? * * Idol altars and temples have crumbled into ruins before the power of the Cross, and we have happily no use for the apostle's argument against partaking of idol's food, but only for his illustration."¹

The statement, (vs. 17,) "For we being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread, is simply intended to convey the idea that believers, though many or *diverse*, partaking spiritually, (with a true and living faith), of one or *the same* bread, are made one, that is, spiritually *homogeneous*; being assimilated to Christ, and therefore, to each other; all alike feeding upon *the same spiritual food*.

With more reason might the Lord's Supper be named *the Communion*, if communion with Christ alone, or mainly, were intended—be-

¹Communion, p. 74, 75.

cause, when properly observed, the rite always involves *communion with him*; communion intimate, deep, and vital.

Communion with Christ, however, is enjoyed by his people, not only in the celebration of the Supper, but in the performance of *many other acts of devotion*, such as the prayer of faith—in which there is the sweetest converse with the Lord, they humbly and trustingly speaking to him, and he making loving response to them—the praise of adoring gratitude, reverent study of the truth, and holy meditation on its teachings; all involving a *mental and spiritual exercise* of the intelligent, conscious agent, without which, the observance of the Lord's Supper, as well as all other *outward acts*, is but a barren, inert, and nugatory thing. Surely, then, the Supper, however sacred, should not *usurp* and *monopolize* the *character* and *title* which rightly belong to all.

But, while *so many* other things share with the Supper, communion with Christ, *none* share with the sacred rite, its grand *prescribed purpose*, the COMMEMORATION of him, in his sufferings and death. This, alone, was ordained

to be a remembrancer of him, and his mighty passion, throughout all lands, and among all generations of men. No other is so adapted to subserve this high and glorious end, as no other, (not excepting baptism itself), is of such a nature as at once to embody the most important and precious truths of the gospel, and, in the most tender and affecting manner, to impress them upon the minds and hearts of men. For the holy rite is to be viewed both *subjectively* and *objectively*. Subjectively, it is *representative* of the actual personal sufferings and death of our Lord, and thus of all that they import, the great essential truths of the whole gospel. Objectively, it is *commemorative* of him, and of all that he, as the embodiment of the entire system of salvation, did, and said, and suffered on behalf of his people.

VIII.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

PART II.

TO nourish and strengthen the spiritual life of the believer, through his participation of the bread and wine, symbolic of the body and blood of Jesus, is, doubtless, an important end of the Lord's Supper. As baptism, the ordinance of *initiation* into the church, and *outwardly the beginning of the new life*, has sometimes been spoken of as symbolically the rite of *regeneration*, and therefore only once to be administered; so, not inappropriately, has the Lord's Supper, administered only *after* baptism, and *often and regularly repeated*, sometimes been called the rite of *nutrition*.

"It is a holy feast, a spiritual repast, a divine entertainment," says the celebrated Isaac

Barrow, somewhat quaintly, “to which God in kindness invites us; to which, if we come with well-disposed minds, he there feeds us with most holy and delicious viands, with heavenly manna, with most reviving and cherishing liquor. Bread is the staff of life, the most common, most necessary, and most wholesome and savory meat; wine is the most pleasant and wholesomæ also, the most sprightly and cordial drink: by them, therefore, our Lord chose to represent that body and blood, by the obligation of which a capacity of life and health was procured to mankind; the taking in which by right apprehension, tasting it by hearty faith, digesting it by careful attention and meditation, converting it into our substance by devout, grateful and holy affections, joined with serious and steady resolutions of living answerable thereto, will certainly support and maintain our spiritual life in a vigorous health and happy growth of grace; refreshing our hearts with comfort and satisfaction unspeakable.”¹

¹Barrow's works, vol. 3, p. 48.

That *the spiritual nourishment and support of his people*, is an important purpose of the Lord's Supper, is manifest from the words of Christ, at the institution of the sacred feast—
“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, *Drink ye all of it*; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”¹

Further evidence still we have in those remarkable words of our Lord, in the sixth chapter of John, in which, (even if there be no direct and special reference by Christ to the holy rite, afterward to be instituted, but only to himself in his whole sacrificial and redeeming work,) *the principle* under consideration is clearly involved.

Olshausen, commenting on these words of our Lord, and their relation to the sacred Supper, says—“It would indeed undoubtedly

¹Matt., xxvi., 26-28.

seem inappropriate that the Saviour should speak of a *rite* before its institution, so that no one could understand the subject of his discourse; but it may be safely concluded, that Christ had at an earlier period touched upon the idea from which the rite afterward arose. That idea is no other than this, that Jesus is the principle of life and nourishment to the new regenerated man, not merely for his soul and his spirit, but also for his glorified body. As this principle of life, he offers himself, and gives himself, especially in his death; hence the mention here, verse 51, (as in the institution of the Supper,) of his death; although this is by no means to be deemed the main point of the whole passage.”¹

But let us read the words of Christ. Although highly figurative, their real spiritual import, when taken in their whole scope, is readily apprehended by every intelligent and discriminating mind:

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the

¹Comm., vol. 2, pp. 416-417.

Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever. * * It is *the spirit* that quickeneth; *the flesh* profiteth nothing; *the words* that I speak unto you, *they are spirit* and *they are life.*"¹

Referring to this remarkable language of our Lord, Dick says—"It is plain that he spoke of the benefits which were to result to the human race from his death, and of *the spiritual participation of them by faith*; for he says, 'He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.'"²

¹Jno. vi., 53-58, 63. ²Lect. Theol., vol. 2, p. 397.

“The Son of God,” says Edgar, “suspended the possession of eternal life on the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood. This was the condition without which man could have no life. None can possess *spiritual* life, unless, *in this sense*, they eat and drink his body and blood. The manducation mentioned by the apostle, is necessary for salvation.”¹

The eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of Christ, are, indeed, necessary to the existence, development, and support of spiritual and divine life in man. But, as the common sense, natural sentiment, and reason of men, all utterly recoil at the bare idea of a *literal physical feeding upon him*, so the whole spirit and genius of the gospel, make it certain that the partaking of himself to which Christ referred, is to be regarded in a purely *figurative* and *spiritual* sense. In the latter view, the myriads of the redeemed have all eaten of his flesh, and drunk of his blood. In the former, not one of the glorious

¹Variations of Popery, p. 388.

throng, has been guilty of the horrid, revolting, impossible act; maugre all the metaphysical subtleties, audacious assumptions, blasphemous asseverations, of the self-stultified advocates of transubstantiation.

The *word of God* always nourishes and strengthens the soul of the believer. It is the bread of life and the water of life upon which he feasts. Christ is the absolute, eternal Word, the impersonation of all truth. He who receives him, receives all truths in one; receives them, so to speak, condensed and concentrated, in their very extract and essence.

Observance of all the ordinances of the Lord's house, obedience to all his commandments, stimulates and strengthens, as well as trains, the child of God. Prayer, praise, and all other acts of worship and of service, give a healthful spiritual exercise necessary to the growth and full development of the "new creature in Christ Jesus." The believer's spiritual stature and strength are determined by the faithfulness with which he walks in all God's ordinances and commandments. Many

an one's spiritual life is weakened and withered, by long refusal to yield to the teachings of God's word, and the monitions of his own conscience, respecting the duty of baptism. At length, obeying, he is re-vitalized, blooms in spiritual freshness and beauty, and brings forth abundant fruit. So is it with respect to the Lord's Supper. He who wilfully and culpably neglects it, famishes and dies of spiritual inanition. Nothing more distinctly marks the commencement and progress of religious declension, with respect to which it is both effect and cause, than such neglect. On the other hand, he who pants after God as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, whose soul, yearning for divine communion, "cries out for God, for the living God," and who never fails to avail himself of the blessed privilege of enjoying him, is spiritually healthy, robust and vigorous, useful and happy. Christ is the absolute and infinite Life. His body and blood represent the substance and vital principle of his whole being. He who rightly receives them, spiritually appropriates the whole Christ, with all his divine

benefits. Some other acts of service are objective, and bless reflexively. Hallowed influences from Christ, are shed upon the believer, in baptism. The devout and loving reception of the Lord's Supper, involves an essentially subjective exercise, in which Christ himself is spiritually received, and "formed within the soul, the hope of glory."

But, though to nourish and strengthen the spiritual life of the believer, is so important an end of the Lord's Supper, it yields to what, for reasons which we have indicated, we must yet regard as a far higher end—the grand end which our Lord had in view in the institution of the blessed rite, that of *commemorating himself, his sufferings and death*, with all that He and they involve, and of thus keeping in the memory of his people, and in the view the whole world, the saving truths of the gospel.

However sweet and profitable may be the believer's personal communion with Christ, in the worthy observance of the Lord's Supper, yet, as that is not its great purpose, to give it a name implying this, is both logically and

practically wrong, as well as in contravention of a sound scriptural interpretation. So to name it, as the whole history of the rite abundantly shows, is not unattended with evil; evil of the most serious character. It is an error, and error is never harmless. It opens the way to the greatest extravagances and superstitions. Witness the papal "transubstantiation," and the Lutheran "consubstantiation;" the kindred conceits of Puseyism, the blasphemous and idolatrous mummeries, as well as deadly errors, of the "mass," and all the gross absurdities connected with the rite, as supposed by all ritualists and high-churchmen, to possess the mystic and marvellous virtues of an inexplicable "opus operatum." Witness, too, the errors both of theory and of practice, even among many who are not Papists or Puseyites, or Lutherans, and whom we should hesitate to class, generally, with strictly high-churchmen or ritualists. Rightly regarding the ordinance as one of "communion with Christ," but exaggerating its intrinsic efficacy, they sometimes administer it, as a means of grace, to the impenitent and the

unbelieving; and, (as would seem with an idea, more or less vague, of its possessing, *in itself*, something of saving virtue,) as a means of salvation, to the sick and the dying.



IX.

GRAND OBJECT OF THE RITE

BUT, apart from all that we have said, it is evident that communion with Christ, however involved in proper participation of the Lord's Supper, was not, any more than the inter-communion of believers, the great primary purpose of the appointment of the sacred feast—seeing that, *without the formal rite*, such communion, *through simple faith alone*, might and would have been enjoyed. That great primary purpose, the one *grand object of the rite*, we affirm again, with emphasis, was, *the commemoration of Christ* in his sufferings and death on behalf of his people. Everything else connected with it, however important in itself, is inferior to that one grand end; an end, in itself, of great significance, and, in its outward bearings, of the utmost moment to the whole world.

While the Son of God was on earth, he displayed his humanity as conspicuously as his divinity. There constantly glowed in his heart, the sweetest and most beautiful human affections. He tenderly loved his disciples. And he yearned for their love in return. He would never forget them. He would have them ever remember himself. It was just before the hour arrived, when he was to be separated from them, by a death of violence and outward ignominy; when they were about to celebrate together, for the last time, the feast which found in him, the demonstration and fulfillment of its divine import, that he said to his apostles — “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”¹ Oh! human and divine Heart! who may measure the height and depth, and length and breadth of thine exceeding love and sympathy, in that pregnant and trying hour!

¹Luke xxii., 15-16.

Having finished, with his chosen ones, the divinely appointed feast of his and their nation, for which he had so intensely longed, he at once instituted the far richer and more precious feast, which was to be the heritage of all nations, the perpetual reminder of a greater deliverance than that of the first-born of Israel, when the first-born of Egypt were slain; *a memento* of the great Deliverer himself, to all generations of mankind.

But, though he instituted the Supper as a memento, most precious, of himself, it was designed for a far higher purpose than any mere personal consideration, dear as that may have been, to his warm and susceptible human heart. Though it has been truly said that "Christ was ever his own theme," and never failed to magnify himself, as well as his office, he was the most unselfish and least ambitious of beings. His self-abnegation was perfect. He pleased not himself. He sought not his own glory. It was for the benefit of his people, and of the whole lost, ruined world, infinitely more than for the satisfying of his own yearning for their continued love, and unfaill-

ing remembrance, that he would have them constantly commemorate himself and his redeeming work. Such commemoration would be productive of incalculable benefits to the whole human race. It would put the great truths respecting his character and work, his sufferings and death, into *a concrete and compact form*, far more affecting and impressive, than any mere abstract statement of them could be. It would concentrate and condense, so to speak, the great saving truths of the gospel, into a beautiful and simple rite, that would outwardly appeal to the senses, powerfully impress the imagination, arouse and keep alive the noblest sentiments of the soul. "In the sacrament of the Supper," says the German theologian Knapp, "the most important truths of Christianity, which we commonly only hear or read, are visibly set before us, made cognizable to the senses, and exhibited in such a way as powerfully to move the feelings, and make an indelible impression on the memory. Hence this sacrament is justly called *verbum Dei* VISIBILE, (the visible word of God.) Some of the most weighty

doctrines of religion which are commonly taught us by *audible words*, through the outward ear, are here inculcated by *external visible signs and actions*.”¹

The substance and spirit, indeed, of *the whole gospel*, enshrined in this divine rite of commemoration, in connection with its kindred rite of baptism, would be preserved, as other distinguished writers have remarked, by the intelligent and appropriate observance of them, even if the rest of the recorded gospel were lost. “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do *show the Lord's death*, till he come. “The Supper,” says the distinguished author just quoted, “was designed to be *a perpetual sermon on the death of Christ*, until he shall come again to bring his followers into the kingdom of the blessed.”² The *death of the Lord*, is the great all-inclusive fact of the whole system of salvation, from which all its principles may be deduced. Others have come into the world to live and to enjoy. Not so Jesus. He

¹Christian Theology, p. 506. ²Ib., p. 499.

came to be "a man of sorrows and grief's acquaintance." The grand end of his mission into the world, was, not to live a noble human and divine life, not to teach men, not to set before them a high and inspiring example, but--*to die*. "The greatest thing," says President Edwards, "that Christ did in the execution of his priestly office, and the greatest thing that he ever did, and the greatest thing that ever was done, was the offering up himself a sacrifice to God. Herein he was the antitype of all that had been done by all the priests, and in all their sacrifices and offerings, from the beginning of the world."¹

It was to set forth this great fact, in all its fullness, and in all its bearings, that Moses, in the law, and the prophets wrote. To it point all the types and shadows; to it refer all the rites and ceremonies; by it are made clear and significant, all the institutions of Judaism. The illustration and enforcement of this sublime fact, was the end of all the preachings, and teachings, and writings, and

¹Edward's Works, vol. 1, p. 409.

labors, of the apostles and their co-adjutors.

The proper observance, therefore, of the rite embodying this great all-embracing fact, its celebration throughout all lands, and in all generations, would give the light of life to all people. "Sensible impressions are much more powerful than those which are made on the understanding. This truth is probably neither so fully nor so deeply realized in any religious ordinance as the Lord's Supper. The breaking of the bread, and the pouring out of the wine, exhibit the sacrifice of Christ with a force, a liveliness of representation, confessed by all Christians, at all times, and indeed by most others also; and unrivalled in its efficacy even by the passover itself. All the parts of this service are perfectly simple, and are contemplated by the mind without the least distraction or labor. The symbols are exact and most lively portraits of the affecting Original, and present to us the crucifixion and the sufferings of the great Subject of it, as again undergone before our eyes. We are not barely taught; we see, and hear, and, of consequence, feel, that

Christ our passover was slain for us, and died on the cross that we might live. As this event, more interesting to mankind than any other which has ever occurred, is thus clearly presented to us in this ordinance, so those doctrines of the Christian system, which are most intimately connected with it, are here exhibited with a corresponding clearness. Particularly, the atonement which this divine Person thus accomplished for mankind, is here seen in the strongest light. With similar certainty, is that depraved character of man, which is here expiated, unfolded to our view; the impossibility of our justification by works of law; our free justification by the grace of God, through faith in the blood of Christ; and, generally, the whole scheme of reconciling apostate man to his offended Creator."¹

With this one grand purpose in view of presenting the substance of the gospel succinctly and graphically, to *the very eye* of the world—a purpose infinitely above all others—was the holy Supper instituted, and commanded to be

¹Dwight's Theology, vol. 4, pp. 356-357.

universally and perpetually observed, *as a memorial of its divine Author*, and of his great sacrificial and saving work.

In presence of that grand purpose, how little seem all others! In comparison with it, how insignificant even the sweet communion with each other of believers!—a holy exercise of soul by no means to be disparaged, but which our human spirit of SELF-EXAGGERATION, is prone sometimes to invest with an undue sacredness, and to raise to a prominence to which it is not entitled.



X.

THE GRAND OBJECT SUPERSEDED.

IT was under the influence of this human and carnal spirit of SELF-EXAGGERATION, which we have mentioned, seconded and powerfully reinforced by other evil influences, that the early, post-apostolic church—teaching that outside its pale was no virtue and no salvation, magnifying the importance of COMMUNION WITH ITSELF, and immensely over-estimating the benefits supposed to accrue from such communion—*superseded the great object* for which the holy Supper was first ordained.

It would be ludicrous, if it were not melancholy, to contemplate the absurd exhibitions, by the early Christians, of this spirit of self-exaggeration. The grandiloquent titles bestowed by the Chinese upon their emperors, the high-

flown terms they apply to themselves as a nation, and the superb adjectives by which “the *magnanimous* Mexican nation,” is wont so naively to characterize itself, provoke a smile. But it excites very different feelings from those of risibility, something far sadder than a smile, when we see the early Christians whom we have been taught to regard with so much reverence and admiration, applying to themselves, in a spirit of Pharisaic pride, with infinite self-complacency, the most exalted language of self-laudation, while pouring out opprobrious epithets, and heaping up anathemas, upon all who ventured to differ from them—upon men like Novatian, Donatus the Great, Jovinian, and Vigilantius; of whom neither the world nor a corrupt church was worthy. The Council of Nice, in 325, styled itself “the *Great and Holy Synod*”! Another General Council, about a century later, spoke of its own canons as those of “the *Holy and Blessed Fathers* assembled at Ephesus”! And other so-called ecumenical, or universal councils, emulating this same spirit of extravagant self-appreciation, bad taste, and most re-

volting vanity, applied to themselves language equally lofty.¹

In this spirit of self-exaggeration, many teachers of the early church made participation in "the awful mystery" of the Lord's Supper, *as administered by themselves alone*, the test of personal character, and of social and religious position. They determined by it even business relations and engagements. Nay, they made it the very passport and portal to heaven. Apart from it, no one could expect patronage, preferment, or honor on earth. Without it, the gates of paradise were barred and bolted against him forever. "There was a tendency," says Isaac Taylor, "of everything towards it; it was more thought of and regarded than any other element of the religious system; the highest benefits were connected with a due participation in it, and the most terrible evils were the consequences of even a temporary exclusion from the privilege. Before the time when the church wielded secular powers, excommunica-

¹See Mosheim, Neander, Taylor on Ancient Christianity, and Hammond on the Canons.

tion was its last resource, in dealing with the refractory; and after the time when ecclesiastical censures were followed by civil pains, it continued to be the terrible precursive act of a process which might deprive the victim of fortune, liberty, life, and consign him to eternal misery."¹ John, the "golden-mouthed," (Chrysostom,) as Taylor tells us, "lauded the eucharistic rite *more than the Saviour.*" When "the rites of the dreadful and mystic table" were celebrated, "cherubim and seraphim," he assured the people, "hovered trembling over the altar, veiling their faces, lest they should catch a glimpse of the *consecrated elements.*"²

In this view of it, we wonder not that men stood in awe of the fearful rite, and its terrible mysteries, "which archangels dared not look upon." We wonder not at its stupendous influence, nor at that "intense anxiety not to be excluded from communion," felt by those who regarded admission to it, as the climax of all blessedness; exclusion from it, the depth of all misery.

¹Anc. Christ., p. 540. ²Ib., pp. 358-368.

We know that far juster views are now taken, by all enlightened, evangelical people. But, in that so common diversion of the mind from contemplation of the Lord's Supper as a devout and grateful *commemoration of our divine Lord*, to other and inferior objects, produced under the influence of the SELF-EXAGGERATING idea of its being a COMMUNION WITH OURSELVES, there is still seen something of the old error, still felt much of its baneful influence.

The extreme *prominence* so early and so generally given to the idea of *inter-communion* between believers at the table of the Lord, though unwarranted either by the personal teachings of Christ, or by those of his apostles, respecting the sacred rite—they having never said anything at all about it—is, to some extent, the unfortunate result of a very natural *inference*, (which, though based upon a misconception, is much insisted on,) conspiring with the *self-exaggerating* tendency just mentioned, in connection with radically defective and superstitious conceptions of the essential character and object of the rite. Eating and drinking together, tends to the cultivation of

sympathy, and friendship, and fraternal love, among men. It has, therefore, been regarded by all people as a symbol of good-will and fellowship. The Arab of the desert, the savage of the western wilds, the roving, barbarous Tartar of the Asiatic steppes, the stolid Esquimau amid his eternal snows, the imbruted Bushman, even, under the blazing suns of Southern Africa, as well as the most highly civilized men of ancient and of modern times, have all alike thus recognized it. Many, therefore, have been led to think that Christ must have had very prominently in view the cultivation of fellowship and communion among his followers, when he instituted the sacred Supper. But, although this may have been, and probably was, one of the subordinate, incidental ends contemplated by our Lord, and which the holy rite, when properly observed, always, to some extent, subserves, it is to be remarked that while Christ never neglects subordinate ends, but, in the affluence of his divine wisdom and power, constantly associates such ends with more important ones, he ever keeps mainly in view,

the supreme end, and is always too mindful of order, and the due relations of things, ever to allow the subordinate to come into competition with the superior; the incidental and the inferior to disparage, obscure, or usurp the place of the essential and the supreme. As if to avoid all danger of this, as well as to guard against other evils, the humble repast which he provided for his disciples, was made so different from other meals, that many, like Dagg and others, have doubted that it was intended to be *a supper* at all, and have hesitated to give it that appellation, maintaining that Paul probably referred not to the rite instituted by Christ, when, in 1 Cor. xi., 20, he employed the words, "Lord's Supper," (*Κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*), but only to *the agape*, or feast of love, which had been connected with it.¹

While perfectly adapted, in its sublime simplicity, to accomplish its great object, as a universal and perpetual *memorial* of Christ, the holy rite is far too simple, serious, solemn,

¹Man'l of Theol., Part II, pp. 56, 57, 58, 205.

spiritual, to have for its main or prominent end, that of the *ordinary feast*. This was so strongly felt by the primitive Christians, that, in order to give fuller expression to their social sympathies, they connected with it the more abundant and freer feast of the agape, not a divine institution at all, and whose abuse by the Corinthians, the apostle so severely censured; asking them, (if they must have feasts), whether they had not houses of their own, in which thus socially and festively to indulge themselves, without despising the church of God, shaming their poorer brethren, desecrating the place dedicated to a pure and spiritual service, and degrading, by unworthy concomitants, the rite consecrated to infinitely higher and holier purposes than those of individual and social enjoyment.¹

In this view, it clearly appears that although Christ may have intended, as incidental to his main purpose, the cultivation by his followers of fellowship and communion, in their observance of the rite commemorative of himself, that object was an altogether secondary and

¹1 Cor., xi., 22.

inferior one. He made it, indeed, *co-incident*, but not *co-ordinate*, with his grand design.


That the Christians of the apostolic age did not regard the Lord's Supper as specially a rite of communion with each other, we have intimated, in what we have just now stated of their connecting with it *the agape*, or feast of love, "at which," in the language of Conybeare and Howson, "they met to realize their fellowship one with another."¹ And it was only where the perversion and abuse of it, as at Corinth, made it necessary to separate it from the Lord's Supper, and finally to abolish it altogether, that, as is most probable, the mutual fellowship which the *agape* was designed to cultivate, was supposed to be an essential object of the sacred Supper itself, and that the latter, filling its own place, and that of the *agape*, began to be termed, under the force of influences of which we are now to speak, *the Communion*; and that the grand object of Christ, in the institution of the blessed rite, was superseded by other and infinitely inferior ends.

Life and Epistles of St. Paul, p. 385.

XI.

CAUSES OF THE SUPERSEDURE.

PART I.

E cannot but suspect that like many other objectionable things, which the post-apostolic church connected with Christianity, the great misnomer upon which we are animadverting, *had something of a pagan origin.*

Through *misapprehension of Paul's before-mentioned use of the term ζοζιογία*, (in which, as in other instances, impelled and guided by an unerring inspiration, he appropriated, as fair spoil, a Greek idea, and wisely employed it in illustration and enforcement of his argument,) in connection with *the all-pervading and potent Hellenic and heathen influence* then prevailing, this might very naturally and easily have happened.

Turretin, who, *on general grounds*, accepts *κοινωνία* as an appellation of the Lord's Supper, referring to Paul's particular use of the word in 1 Cor. x., 16, after affirming that the apostle *did not intend by it to give name to the ordinance*, and stating the *special sense* in which he employs the term, says, respecting the free construction of his language by the early fathers—"Hinc factum ut patres passim," etc.,—"Hence it was that the fathers generally designated the whole observance by the name of *the Communion*." Specially alluding to Dionysius the Areopagite, and to Chrysostom, (Greek fathers), he says that the one designated the Supper as "the mystery of the congregation, (*συνάξεως*), or of *the communion*," (*κοινωνίας*), and that the other called it "the spiritual and tremendous *communion* of the mysteries"—both fathers, like so many others, earlier than Chrysostom, and later than Dionysius, misconceiving the nature and grand design of the rite.¹

In the second and third centuries, the terms

¹Turretini Opera, III., De Sacra Coena, Quæst. xvi., p. 331. Edinburgh Edition.

κοινωνία and *communio*, seem, according to Origen, not to have been used of the Lord's Supper particularly, but only in a general sense of *Christian fellowship*.¹ In the fourth and succeeding centuries, as we learn from Augustine, Basil the Great, and others,² they were employed for *the act* of taking the Supper, and for *the elements*, and so for the Supper itself; though its more general appellation, among the Greeks, especially, for a considerable time had been, and still continued to be, besides that of the *eucharist*, (εὐχαριστία), the purely pagan one, τὸ τέλειον,—*the finishing, perfecting, consummating rite*; or, as Hammond renders it — “*the Perfection*.”³

¹Orig., III., 485. B.

²Aug., III., on Matt. vi., 11—“Qui non quotidie cœnæ dominicæ *communicant*.” Contra Cresconium, 3, 35—“Si in *communione* sacramentorum mali maculant bonos.” Sulpicius Severus, II., 37—“Athanasius [Marcellum] a *communione* suspendit.” Basil the Great, IV., 800 — Ὁ κλέψας ἐν αὐτὸν κωλυθήσεται μόνον τῆς κοινωνίας τῶν ἁγιασμάτων. Joannes Damascenus, De Fide Orthodox., IV., 13—“Διὰ τὸ κοινωνεῖν ἡμᾶς δι’ αὐτῆς τῷ Χριστῷ.... καὶ ἐνοῦσθαι ἀλλήλοις.”

³On the Canons, p. 157.

Thus we see that the terms *κοινωνία* and *communio*, not used at all as appellations of the Lord's Supper, in the apostolic age, and employed chiefly to signify *fellowship, in general, among Christians*, for some time thereafter, gradually assumed a *technical sense* in relation to the rite, until they became, in process of time, its *fixed appellatives*.

How this was, most probably, brought about, is a matter of no little interest and importance; and we trust we shall be pardoned for considering it somewhat at length.

Discussing the ancient and universal rite of sacrifice, the learned and able Bishop Warburton says—"This important rite first dictated by natural reason, did not long continue in its original integrity. Of all the customs in use amongst men *those respecting religion are most liable to abuse*. For the passions of *hope* and *fear* become then most inordinate when the mind is taken up and occupied in the offices of divine worship. At this season, the sobriety of common sense is often forced to give way to the extravagance of the imagination. * * Sacrifice being

a scenical rite, it was principally fitted to strike the fancy; which, delighting in paradox and mystery, would riot in this enchanted ground, till it had lost sight of the simple meaning of a plain expressive action. * * Under this state of delusion, *eucharistical* and *propitiatory* sacrifices were soon imagined to receive their chief value from the *costliness* of the offering; and *hecatombs* were supposed more acceptable to heaven than purity of mind, adorned with gratitude, and humble reliance on the Deity. * * *Pomp of sacrifice* was everywhere preferred to the *piety of the offerer*. * * But, in *expiatory* sacrifices, matters went still worse. For, in these, the passion of *fear* being predominant, strange enormities were soon superadded to the follies of the worshipers.”¹

Though employed in reference to the general rite of sacrifice, our author’s words have, we think, a special and most forcible application to the Lord’s Supper, as conceived and celebrated by the church of the

¹ Divine Legation of Moses, vol. 3, pp. 375, 376.

second and third centuries, and later. For it was, by multitudes, regarded as a *sacrifice*, eucharistical, propitiatory, expiatory, and its observance had become pre-eminently "scenical."

The assumption of *false principles* is intimately connected with the assumption and acceptance of *false terms*, or of terms used in false senses. "How much turns, often, (and it is an observation perpetually offering itself in the perusal of church history), upon an insensible substitution of a *technical* for the *general and genuine sense* of an ethical term! It was just by the aid of some of these hardly perceptible substitutions, that the ready means were formed of gaining an apparently scriptural warranty for practices flagrantly contravening the spirit and meaning of scriptural morality."¹

How applicable this general statement of the learned Isaac Taylor, to the particular case in hand - the substitution of the technical term "Communion," for "the general and genuine sense" of the Lord's Supper!

¹ Ancient Christianity, p. 116.

Many terms taken from the pagan vocabulary, (by men not inspired like Paul, and the other writers of the Bible, and not pure and wise like them), conveying false and injurious ideas, were early incorporated into the literature of the church. Chrysostom speaks of Peter as the *Præfect* of the *universal* church—thus making way with his splendid eloquence and vast influence, for the fixed idea, (then, and for some time earlier, rapidly forming), of his *supremacy*, as well as *primacy*, over a *world-wide ecclesiastical empire*. The calling of his supposed successor, by titles Peter never knew, *Pope*, (πάππας, *papa*), *Sovereign Pontiff*, (Pontifex Maximus), etc., as well as the calling of a *local church*, (the church of Rome,)—from the very nature of things, a limited organization—the *Catholic*, (Καθολική), or *Universal Church*,—(thus, as Barrow wittily says, “committing a *bull*, implying Rome and the universe to be the same place”¹), was a natural sequence, and followed fast.

¹Barrow's Works, vol. 3, p. 201.

The term *mysteries*, (*μυστήρια*), in its pagan sense, was early applied to the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel, and, indeed, to the whole Christian system. "The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman mysteries," says Mosheim, "and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them, was a further circumstance that induced the Christians to give their religion a *mystic air*, in order to put it upon an equal footing, in point of dignity, with that of the pagans. For this purpose, they gave the name of *mysteries* to the institutions of the gospel, and decorated particularly the *holy sacrament*, (the Lord's Supper), with that solemn title. They used in that sacred institution, as also in that of baptism, several of the terms employed in the heathen mysteries; and proceeded so far, at length, as even to adopt some of the rites and ceremonies of which these renowned mysteries constituted. This imitation began in the eastern provinces; but after the time of Adrian, who first introduced the mysteries among the Latins, it was followed

by the Christians who dwelt in the western parts of the empire. A great part, therefore, of the service of the church in this century, [the second], had *a certain air of the heathen mysteries*, and resembled them considerably in many particulars.”¹

The word “sacrament” (*sacramentum*) itself, which has so much mystified, by the various senses in which it has been employed, both the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as well as the minds of men, furnishes another signal instance of the derivation, by the Christian fathers, of famous ecclesiastical terms from pagan sources. The original Latin word (*sacramentum*) meant *an oath*, “on account of its sacred nature,” particularly *the military oath*. The “comparison of their vocation to a military service,” being, as Neander says, “a favorite one,” among the early Christians, the word was generally used by them, in this sense, in connection with the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; they thus intending to signify

¹Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1, pp. 464, 465. Mac-laine’s edition.

that in receiving these rites, they virtually took "the Christian's military oath," by which "they bound themselves to live and fight as soldiers of God and of Christ"¹ The word also signified among the Romans, *a sum of money* deposited as *a forfeit* in litigated cases, and "which was devoted to sacred uses." In ecclesiastical Latinity, the term assumed through pagan Greek and other influences, a new meaning, and was employed as the equivalent of *μυστήριον*, (mystery), a term signifying any "secret and unknown thing," and employed by the Greek Christians "to denote not only the profound and incomprehensible doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, but also Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and especially the latter, which was called *ἅγιον μυστήριον*, (the holy mystery); partly no doubt because under external symbols spiritual blessings were veiled, but partly also on account of *the secret manner* in which it was celebrated. *As* the heathen had their mysteries, to which none but the initiated

¹Hist. Ch. Rel. and Ch., vol. 1, pp. 307, 309.

were admitted; so the church came, at an early period, to allow none to be present when the Lord's Supper was administered, but the baptized; and heathens, Jews, excommunicated persons, and catechumens were excluded."¹ The word "was adopted the more willingly by the fathers, because they were accustomed to compare the doctrines and rites of Christianity, with the doctrines and ceremonies of the pagan mysteries, in order to secure for them a higher regard and authority among the heathen."²

Even the common conception and use, by the early Christians, of the horrid stake and transverse beam on which Jesus died, *the cross*, (*crux*, σταυρός,)--the fruitful source of so many egregious errors and monstrous superstitions--seems to have been, (through undue liberties taken with language), far more pagan than Christian. The sense of σταυρός and *crux*, as used by the Greek and Roman writers, in their higher and broader sense, is

¹Dick's Lectures on Theology, vol. 2, pp. 353, 354.

²Knapp's Theology, p. 480.

very different from that they bear when applied to the post, or tree, on which his enemies impaled the Son of God. "The cross was used emblematically before the Christian era. Upon a multitude of medals and ancient monuments, are to be found crosses placed in the hands of statues of Victory, and of figures of emperors. It was also placed upon a globe, which, ever since the days of Augustus, has been the sign of the empire of the world, and the image of victory. The shields, the cuirasses, the helmets, the imperial cap, were all thus decorated."¹ The malefactor's cross, in the time of Christ, "was simply a piece of wood, fastened across a tree, or upright post, on which were executed criminals of the very worst character."² Hence Peter charged the Jews with having slain and hanged Jesus, "*on a tree.*"³ In his first General Epistle he uses the same expression—"He bore our sins in his own body, *on the tree.*"⁴ Paul, too, more than once employs it.⁵

¹Enc. Americana, Art. Cross. ²Ibid. ³Acts v. 30; x. 39. ⁴1 Pet. ii. 24. ⁵See Acts xiii. 29, and Gal. iii. 13, in connection with Deut. xxi. 23.

The handsome cross, formed of ebony, and of ivory, and of gold, used as a charm and amulet, as well as ornament, by highly imaginative, sentimental, and superstitious Christians—in its simple, but striking form, furnishing, at a later time, the outline model for their churches and cathedrals—the adored cross, worn near the heart of the sad-visaged monk, and the lonely eremite; pendent from the neck of woman; engraved or embossed on the shield of the soldier, and of the gallant knight; adorning the proud escutcheons of prince and of noble; emblazoned on the waving banners of triumphant armies; surmounting the turrets and spires, towers and domes of gorgeous temples—this was a very different thing; not half, nor a hundredth part so like “the accursed tree,” the rude and miserable frame, the savage gibbet, on which hung “the Prince of Life,” as it was like the beautiful Greek or Latin cross of the poets and mythologists—a graceful and attractive symbol of the generative principle, of victory, and of empire. The emperor Constantine erected “in the midst of Rome, his

own statue, bearing a cross in its right hand; with an inscription which referred the victory of his arms, and the deliverance of Rome, to the virtue of that salutary sign, the true *symbol of force and courage*. The same symbol sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine; the cross glittered on their helmets, was engraved on their shields, was interwoven into their banners; and the consecrated emblems which adorned the person of the emperor himself, were distinguished only by richer materials, and more exquisite workmanship." The imperial standard, "the *Labarum*, an obscure, though celebrated name, which has been vainly derived from almost all the languages of the world, supported a crown of gold which enclosed the mysterious monogram at once expressive of the figure of the cross, and the initial letters of the name of Christ."¹

Employed as it was by the pagans, it had a far nobler use than that to which it was subsequently often so profanely consecrated.

¹Decline and Fall of Roman Empire, vol. 2, pp. 260, 261.

Though having then no recognized connection with the idea of death, but rather of life, it was a widely diffused and striking *prophecy*, perhaps, of the rise and progress, the greatness and glory of the empire of Him, who, though He was to be so cruelly and ignominiously crucified, was to win, in his deepest defeat, his highest victory; and out of death, to bring everlasting life. But, while it subserved this glorious end, it also subserved the humbler one, of showing how came from pagan rather than from Christian sources, the early conception and the practice of those, who, more imbued with idealism, and sentiment, and superstition, than with the spirit of genuine devotion, were more captivated by the splendid symbolic and typical prophecy, than by the plainer literal fulfillment itself.

Carried away with the enthusiasm of such conceptions, transported by the fervors of religious devotion, and also moved by the desire to excuse and give color to their veneration, not to say adoration, of the mere material cross, "the Christian writers, Justin,

Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Jerome, and Maximus of Turin, have investigated, with tolerable success, the figure or likeness of a cross, in almost every object of nature or art—in the intersection of the meridian and equator, the human face, a bird flying, a man swimming, a mast and yard, a plow, a *standard*, etc., etc., etc.¹

Need we wonder, in view of all this, if, (from the same source whence came so many other errors and extravagances, and so many wrongly applied terms), “ἡ ζωωνία,” in an erroneous sense, early became stereotyped as the fixed and unfortunate appellation of our Lord’s *memorial rite*?

But we are not yet done with our authorities.

¹Decline and Fall, vol. 2, p. 260—*Note*.

XII.

CAUSES OF THE SUPERSEDURE.

PART II.

§ SPEAKING of Tertullian as having “given the clue, (which may, indeed, elsewhere be found clearly enough), to the institution of celibacy, as a permanent order in the church,” the learned author of the valuable work on “Ancient Christianity and the Doctrines of the Oxford Tracts,” says--“Satan had his devoted widows, and his virgin priestesses, and should not Christ have the like? The well known heathen practices, in this respect, were looked upon with *a sort of jealousy*, by the ill-judging leaders of the church, who deemed it *a point of honor not to be outdone* in any extravagant act or practice of devotion by the Gentiles, over whom they might have been content to claim the genuine superiority of real virtue. The same

fatal ambition, as we shall see hereafter, operated as a principal means of *perverting the ritual and system of worship*, and of spoiling, in all its parts, the simplicity of the gospel.”¹

Tertullian, “the most vigorous, as well as one of the earliest of the Christian writers, and the contemporary of men who had conversed with the immediate successors of the apostles,” was a man of culture, a lawyer of ability and position, and had been a pagan. In the passage referred to by Taylor, as “giving the clue to the institution of celibacy,” Tertullian says---“Among the heathen, a *strictness of discipline*, in this respect, is observed, which ours do not submit to. But these restraints the devil imposes on his servants, and he is obeyed; and hereby stimulates the servants of God to reach an equal virtue. The priests of Gehenna retain their continence; for the devil knows how to destroy men, even in the practice of the virtues; and he cares not, so that he does but slay them, whether it be by the indulging of the flesh,

¹Taylor’s *Anc. Christ.*, p. 138.

or by mortifying it." To which Taylor adds — "Well would it have been for the church, had this double-dealing of the adversary been thoroughly understood, and so those devices resisted, which were as fatal to the serious and fervent, as the common baits of sensuality are to the mass of mankind. A false principle, once assumed, under strong excitement, has the power to infatuate even the strongest and the best informed minds, and to lead them to any extent of extravagance."¹

"Deep-rooted superstition," says Warburton, "is always spreading wide and more wide." And it is hard to eradicate. It seems, indeed, well-nigh immortal. How did that of the early Christian fathers, with wondrous celerity, overspread the world! How long has it endured! How long does it promise still to endure! What a huge crop of incredible errors, of unspeakable evils to mankind, has it brought forth, and does it promise still to bring forth! "The imitation of paganism," as Gibbon, (in common with the other authors

¹Anc. Christ., pp. 138, 139.

whom we have quoted), phrases it, was, in great part, its product, with its whole "hierarchy of saints and angels, of imperfect and subordinate deities," its "images and relics," its "visions and miracles," and all the other innumerable perversions and abominations of popery!

Even "after the conversion of the imperial city, the Christians," says Gibbon, "still continued, in the month of February, the annual celebration of the Lupercalia; to which they ascribed a secret and mysterious influence on the genial powers of the animal and vegetable world." The popish "Jubilees," of a later date, the same author further tells us, were *the copy* of the "Secular Games," which had been instituted or revived by the pagan emperor Augustus."¹

The author of the well-known work on the "Variations of Popery," the distinguished Dr. Edgar, speaking of that great theological figment, *Purgatory*, first hinted at by Augustine, and subsequently made a fixed and capital

¹See *Decline and Fall*, vol. 3, p. 493, and vol. 1, p. 293, with Note.

dogma of the papal church, says—"The absurdity has, with some modifications adapting it to another system, been *stolen, without being acknowledged, from heathenism*; and appended like a useless and deforming wen, to the fair form of Christianity."¹

As it was in respect to the institutions of celibacy and monachism, the festivals of the Lupercalia, the lustrations and processions, the jubilees, purgatory, and innumerable other unscriptural and baleful things, gradually introduced; the worship of the Virgin, the saints, angels, images, etc., conceived and developed amongst a corrupt and paganized people, so was it respecting the Lord's Supper; perverted views of it, at first, and the application to it of erroneous terms, all culminating, at last, in paying divine homage to the "consecrated host."

There were strong influences leading to this deep and wide-spread defection from truth. On the one hand, a disposition, as has been said, *to rival and outvie the heathen*, in some of

¹Variations of Popery, p. 516.

their most noted customs and institutions. On the other, a worthier desire to propitiate and conciliate them, and thus to win them to Christianity.

Referring to the corruption of the pagan mysteries, Warburton says—"A like corruption, from the same cause, *crept even into the church, during the purest ages of it.* The primitive Christians, *in imitation*, perhaps, of these pagan rites, or from the *same kind of spirit*, had a custom of celebrating *vigils* in the night; which at first were performed with all becoming sancity, but in a little time they were so overrun with abuses, that it was necessary to abolish them."¹

Alluding to the denunciation of the pagan mysteries, by some of the early fathers, the same celebrated author says—"But here comes in the strange part of the story; that after this, they should *so studiously and formally* TRANSFER *the terms*, phrases, rites, ceremonies, and discipline of these odious mysteries INTO OUR HOLY RELIGION; and thereby very early

¹Divine Legation, vol. 1, p. 225.

vitiate and deprave what a pagan writer. (Aminianus Marcellinus,) could see and acknowledge to be *absoluta et simplex*, as it came out of the hands of its author. Sure, then, it was for some more than ordinary veneration the people had for all these mysteries, that could *incline* the fathers of the church to so *fatal a counsel*; however, *the thing is notorious*, and the effects have been severely felt.”¹

It was under the influence of this extraordinary “veneration which the people had for the mysteries,” as well as, perhaps, from their own secret learnings, in sympathy with the popular mind, that the early fathers, as Casaubon, (cited by Warburton,) tells us, largely *appropriated terms, doctrines, and rites, derived from those mysteries, and applied them to the gospel*. They not only called the plain and simple ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, “mysteries,” but they also designated them by many other pagan appellations, sometimes, as he says, even calling them “*orgies*.” The *Priests*, (as they early began, from Juda-

¹Divine Legation, vol. 1, p. 230.

istic and pagan influences combined, to call the humble ministers of Jesus,) bore a variety of pagan titles, such as *μυσταί*, *μυσταγῶγοι*, *ἐροτελεσταί*, (*INITIATORS into sacred mysteries.*) So, too, did Christians, generally, bear such titles. They were called *μεμυημένοι*, *μυσταί*, *μυσταγῶγητοι*, (*THE INITIATED into sacred mysteries.*) And as there were “grades” in the pagan rites, so the enthusiastic and ambitious fathers formed, in accordance with them, *grades* in the simple Christian rites—the grades of “purification,” of “initiation,” and of “consummation.” Cicero, a little before, had spoken of the “better hope,” with which the Attic mysteries inspired the dying. So the fathers and leaders of the church, more than matched the high claim of the great philosopher and orator on behalf of those celebrated rites; teaching that the “mysteries of Christ”—the “sacraments”—gave “health and everlasting life,” to all who participated in them; while, for those who neglected them, hope, beyond the grave, there was none. The authors of the vain superstitions of the heathen mysteries, presumed to claim for

their most favored votaries, the honors of deification. So the Christian leaders, determining not to be outdone, claimed, too, for their mysteries, the same divine power; maintaining that they who rightly observed them, would rise to the dignity and glory of gods, in the future world! As the heathen had their *tesseræ*, (pass-words, or tokens, for mutual recognition at their secret assemblages and feasts,) so the early Christians had their "tesseræ," too, for a like purpose. The heathen, dismissing from their sacred assemblies the uninitiated, employed a fixed formula, and cried out, [we omit the Greek of similar sense with the Latin,] "*Procul este Profani!*"—*Away, ye Profane Ones!* So, too, the Christians had their formula of dismissal; and before their "secret and terror-striking mysteries" opened, cried out, through their herald, the "Levite" or Deacon, "*Omnes catechumeni, foras discedite, omnes possessi, omnes non initiati!*"—*All ye catechumens, all within the sacred precincts, all ye uninitiated ones, go forth!* The pagans performed their secret rites by night. So, following them, did the Chris-

tians perform theirs, too, nocturnally. Some of them spoke glowingly of “the most splendid night of vigils.” The solemn silence and reserve maintained with respect to the deeper secrets of their mysteries, by the pagan hierophants, were closely imitated by the Christian teachers of the early church. The more sacred of the holy things of the heathen, *the incommunicable things*, (τὰ ἀπρόρρητα,) were made known to the more advanced votaries alone; while *the communicable* (τὰ ἔκφρα,) might be taught to others. So the fathers of the church had their *communicable* and their *incommunicable things*—their τὰ ἔκφρα, and their τὰ ἀπρόρρητα.”¹

Warburton, having quoted from Casaubon’s Sixteenth Exercitation on the Annals of Baronius, the passage from which the foregoing statements are substantially derived, proceeds to say—“But the worst part of the story is still behind, which the concluding words of the quotation will not suffer me to pass over in silence. These fathers used so

¹Div. Leg., vol. 1, pp. 390, 391.

strange a language in speaking of the *Last Supper*, that it gave occasion to a corrupt and barbarous church, in after times to ingraft upon it a doctrine more stupendously absurd and blasphemous than ever issued from the mouth of a pagan priest. What is further to be lamented in the affair is this, that the fathers who so complaisantly suffered themselves to be misled by these *mysteries*, in their representation of the Christian faith, would not suffer the mysteries to set them right, in the meaning of a term frequently found in the New Testament, and borrowed from those rites, namely, the very word itself, *mystery*; which, amongst the men from whom it was taken, did not signify the revealing of a thing incomprehensible to human reason; but the revealing of a thing kept hid, and secreted, which yet, in its nature, was very plain and intelligible.”¹

In addition to all this, it may be proper to say that the heathen had, in connection with their mysteries, not only, as we have

¹Div. Leg., vol. 1, p. 391.

seen, "Vigils," but "*the Confessional*," and "Penance," and "Probation" preparatory to imitation into the *greater* mysteries—a probation strikingly resembling that of the catechumens, or candidates for baptism and initiation into the church and its mysteries.

Is it an *accidental coincidence* that the post-apostolic Christians had all these things *in common with the pagans*? Hardly!

That *this coincidence* was *designed*, and *deliberately* effected, by the early Christians, has been, perhaps, already sufficiently shown; but "to make assurance doubly sure," we give additional testimony, equally learned and unimpeachable.

"We have already mentioned," says Dean Waddington, "*the copious transfusion of heathen ceremonies into the Christian worship*, which had taken place *before the end of the fourth century*, and to a certain extent *paganized*, (if we may so express it), the outward form and aspect of religion; those ceremonies became more general, and more numerous, and so far as the calamities of the times would permit, more splendid, in the age which followed.

To *console the convert* for the loss of his favorite festivals, others, of a different name, but similar description, were introduced.”¹

Mosheim, speaking of the church in the fourth century, says that there was “a preposterous desire of *imitating* the pagan rites, and of *blending* them with the Christian worship. The public processions and supplications,” continues he, “by which the pagans endeavored to appease their gods were now *adopted* into the Christian worship and celebrated with great pomp and magnificence in several places. The virtues which had formerly been ascribed to the heathen temples, to their lustrations, to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches, to water consecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the same privileges that the former enjoyed under the darkness of paganism, were conferred upon the latter, under the light of the gospel, or rather under that cloud of superstition that was obscuring its glory. It is true that as yet

¹Church History, p. 118.

images were not very common; nor were there any statues at all. But it is at the same time as undoubtedly certain, as it is extravagant and monstrous, that *the worship of the martyrs was modelled by degrees, according to the religious services that were paid to the gods before the coming of Christ.*"¹

Recurring to this subject, in another connection, the same distinguished historian says — "The rites and institutions by which the Greeks, Romans, and other nations, had formerly testified their religious veneration for fictitious deities, were now adopted, with some slight alterations, by Christian bishops, and employed in the service of the true God. We have already mentioned the reasons alleged for this *imitation*, so proper to disgust all who have a just sense of the native beauty of genuine Christianity. These fervent heralds of the gospel, whose zeal outran their candor and ingenuity, imagined that the nations would receive Christianity with more facility, when they saw the rites

¹Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1, p. 282. Maclaine's Edition.

and ceremonies to which they were accustomed, adopted in the church, and the same worship paid to Christ and his martyrs, which they had formerly offered to their idol deities. Hence it happened, that in these times, [but little more than two hundred years after the apostles], the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little in its external appearance, from that of the Christians. Both had a most pompous and splendid ritual. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers, processions, lustrations, images, gold and silver vases, and many such circumstances of pageantry, were equally to be seen in the heathen temples and the Christian churches.”¹

Edgar, having spoken of “the use and worship of images *adopted from gnosticism or gentilism*,” as an “ugly excrescence,” an “adventitious appendage of Christianity,” briefly indicates the stages, under the ever-intensifying spirit of paganism, of that idolatrous practice. “The *veneration* of the cross, and of relics,” he

¹Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1, pp. 301, 302.

says, "was first introduced. The emblem of redemption, or the remains of a saint, were preserved with a superstitious devotion. The portrait or the statue of the saint or the Saviour succeeded, as more striking memorials of holiness or salvation. The painted or sculptured effigy, introduced, indeed, with caution, was allowed to adorn the oratory, instruct the ignorant, warm the frigid, or *gratify the prepossessions of the convert from gentilism*. The new portraits and statues, though executed in defiance of taste, spread from east to west, gratified the imagination of the superstitious, ornamented the Grecian temple, or Roman basilic, and finally received the *adoration* of the delighted and degraded votary."¹

Neander, though he never fails, with his sweet and generous charity, to make out the best case possible for the early Christians, evincing no sympathy with any who might be inclined, in questionable cases, to find evidence of their conformity with paganism—the light of his own pure and loving spirit

¹Variations of Popery. pp. 470, 471.

constantly softening and relieving the darkest shades of their character and conduct—is yet constrained by his superior regard for truth, to add the weight of his great name, to the overwhelming proof of that unwise, (to use no harsher term,) emulation and imitation of the pagans, which so signally marked the worship of the post-apostolic church. Discussing the Lord's Supper, he speaks of “the *comparison* that was made between the *Christian worship* and the *Grecian mysteries*,” and of “the *transference of the conception of the mysteries to the holy Supper*,” and of the opinion thus engendered and widely prevalent, that “one ought not to speak of those holy things *before the uninitiated*.”¹ Speaking of the confession of faith of the early Christians as made orally, rather than in writing, he says—“In later times, a disposition to dip into mysteries quite alien from the spirit of the simple gospel, which disposition had first found entrance into the Alexandrian church, from *her leaning to an accommodation with the pagan mysteries*, and from

¹Hist. Ch. Rel. and Ch., vol. 1, pp. 327, (note,) 328, 329.

the influence of the Neo-Platonic mysticism, gave to this custom the meaning that the most sacred things ought not to be entrusted to writing—[a hint at the *rationale* and the *source* of the papal doctrine of “tradition”]—lest they should be *produced among the uninitiated*, and thereby *become profaned*,—while yet the scripture, the holiest tradition of the divine, might come into the hands of every heathen, while the apologist felt no scruples in presenting before the heathen, the inmost mysteries of Christian doctrine!” In a note upon the passage last cited, the great historian further remarks—“The like play and parade about mysteries, to which more importance came to be attached than they originally possessed, afterwards led to *the invention* of the obscure, vague, and unhistorical idea of a *disciplina arcani*, (regimen of mystery,) of which, from its very vagueness and want of foundation, men could *make whatever they pleased*.”¹

Now, if the post-apostolic Christians were so deeply imbued with the spirit of paganism,

¹Hist. Ch. Rel. and Ch., vol. 1., p. 308.

and so readily adopted the heathen ideas, doctrines, institutions, terms, rites and practices, which we have mentioned, with many others which it were tedious to name, is it to be at all wondered at, if they derived the idea of the *Koinwía*, (the *Fellowship* and its *Communion*,) as it was applied to the Lord's Supper, from the same source? We are persuaded that no dispassionate and candid mind can for a moment think so, seeing that such an instance of their adoption of pagan ideas, and a pagan form of expression, is as nothing, when compared with other instances of pagan conformity, which we have given.

But, let us look at this matter a little more closely.

XIII.

CAUSES OF THE SUPERSEDURE.

PART III.

THERE were, among the ancient heathen, certain societies or brotherhoods, referred to by Catullus, Cicero, Tacitus, and others, which were called by the Greeks *Κοινωνία*, and by the Romans *Sodalitia*, (Fellowships) Cicero, viewing some of them chiefly in their *social* aspect, has called them banqueting clubs, though he also speaks of their feasts in honor of the gods. Tacitus, regarding them rather in their religious than in their social character, or, perhaps, alluding to others, has represented them as composed of “a sort of priests who formed together a college.”

Many of those fellowships had rites and ceremonies similar to, if they were not identified with, the more august and wide-spread

mysteries of which we have already spoken. In honor of their particular divinities, they celebrated rich and splendid feasts, and performed other solemn and imposing services. Paul and John are supposed by some expositors to have had in mind those fellowships, when they wrote several striking passages of their epistles.¹

Macknight, after speaking of the use of the term *κοινωνία*, in the New Testament, says,—“*κοινωνία* also signifies a *fellowship* or *company of men*, joined together by some common bond, for the purpose of obtaining certain advantages by means of their union. Among the heathen, there were a variety of such fellowships, called by the Latins *Sodalitia*. And because many of them were instituted for celebrating the mysteries or secret worship of their gods, the particular god in honor of whom the fellowship was instituted, was considered as the head of it; and the author of the benefits which the associated expected to derive from their fellow-

¹See 1 Cor. i. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18; 1 Jno. i. 3-7.

ship in his worship." The same writer also says—"In this sense the word *fellowship* is with great propriety applied to the disciples of Christ, united by their common faith into one society or church, for worshiping the only true God, through the mediation of His Son Jesus Christ; and for receiving from him, through the same mediation, the great blessings of protection and direction in the present life, and of pardon and eternal happiness in the life to come." He further says, that, "agreeably to this account of *the Christian fellowship*, the apostle contrasts the heads thereof with the heads of the heathen fellowships."¹

The feast of the *zoizwvia* and its accompanying rites, or at least participation in them, according to Chandler, *took the name of the zoizwvia itself*. "The Greeks likewise," says he, in his note on Eph. v. 11, "used the word *zoizwvia* to denote a participation in their religious rites and mysteries, and in the benefits supposed to be procured by them."²

¹On the Epistles, 1 Jno. i. 3—note 3.

²Ib., Jno. i. 3—note 3; Eph. v. 11—note 1.

Admission to these “*rites and mysteries*,” was regarded as a most distinguished privilege; and only the initiated, as in the case of the more general and famous mysteries, were permitted to be present at their observance. Multitudes of their pagan votaries became Christians. Many of their old ideas and old sympathies still remained, and clung tenaciously to them. Waddington, alluding to this rapid influx of heathen converts into the church, says—“*These naturally sought in the new religion, for any resemblance to the popular ceremonies of the old.*”¹ They felt, when they gave in their adhesion to Christ, that they must have their Christian as they had had their pagan *zoῦντία*, and conform the feast in honor of Jesus, the head and divinity of their new “fellowship,” to that in honor of their former divinities. Now, they found in the church, a ready-made “fellowship,” and in the Lord’s Supper, its appropriate feast. And as they had called their heathen rites, *mysteries*, and invested

¹History of the Church, p. 154.

them with the utmost sacredness, and had excluded from participation in them and the feasts with which they were connected, all but the initiated; so, after becoming Christians, they, and all under their influence, rivalling and outdoing the unconverted heathen, even in their "greater mysteries," called the Lord's Supper, and its "concomitants," not only *mysteries*, but mysteries "terrible," "astounding," "ineffable"—upon which even the hierarchies of heaven could not look without fear and trembling—and, with an austere and rigorous strictness, excluded all but "the initiated," (the members of the church,) from participation in them. They preached before others, sang and read the scriptures before them, and gave various instructions to the catechumens, or probationers; but the house was cleared, with the imperative formula already noticed, when they commenced the mysterious preliminaries and awful adjuncts of the "dreadful feast" of the Church, their new *κοινωνία*, or fellowship. Then, those initiated into the "tremendous mysteries" of the new religion, the Christian *κοινωνία*, after va-

rious mystic and magical manipulations, broke bread, and drank wine, together. And the feast which they thus celebrated, after the manner of the pagan *κοινωνία*, readily took the name, as before, of the *κοινωνία* itself, and was called the *κοινωνία*, or the *Communion*.

And thus the Supper of the Lord came to be regarded, in the language of the devout and erudite Isaac Taylor,¹ as “*a communion with the Church*,” or, “*the rite which sealed and signified that communion*,” rather than as the sacred and divine rite which *commemorated Christ*, and the great salvation wrought by him for mankind.

Now, in view of the instances adduced, of *emulation* and *imitation* of the heathen, by the early Christians, their adoption of pagan ideas, terms, doctrines, rites, and ceremonies innumerable; in view of the *usus loquendi* of the New Testament writers respecting our Lord's great commemorative rite, according to which, while that rite is called the *Lord's Supper*,² the

¹Anc. Christ., p. 139. ²1 Cor. xi. 20

“*breaking of bread*,”¹ and “*the Lord’s table*,”² it is never, *as a rite*, called *the communion*—(the single instance of the use, in connection with the Supper, of a term importing communion, having been shown to furnish no warrant for the naming of the rite); in view of the fact, that the idea of *fellowship* between believers, not prominent, if involved at all, in 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, is not elsewhere prominent, in connection with the ordinance, but that, on the other hand, another idea is conspicuously so; in view of the prevalent spirit of SELF EXAGGERATION, of which we have spoken, and from which, certainly, the early Christians not more than others, were exempt; in view of all this, we respectfully submit, that it is extremely *improbable*, if not *impossible*, that the name in question, the great theological and ecclesiastical *misnomer*, as we are constrained to regard it, should have come from the New Testament, or from apostolic usage; and that it is, therefore, naturally and logically, (as we think we have shown that it is *historically*), to be traced to the source indicated above.

¹Acts ii. 42, 46; xx. 7, 11. ²1 Cor. x. 21.

These views being just, all those who accept the renowned declaration of the great Chillingworth,—“The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants!”¹—will consistently give its true designation to our Lord’s great *memorial rite*, and discourage its supersedure, with that of the great object of the rite, by an inappropriate and unscriptural appellation, against which are so many cogent reasons, already to some extent indicated, but which we now proceed, a little more formally, yet briefly, to state.

¹Chillingworth’s Works, vol. 2, p. 410. Oxford Ed.



XIV.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST SUPERSEDURE.

WHILE, as we have so fully seen, in previous sections of this treatise, there is no sufficient reason for regarding the Lord's Supper as the rite of mutual fellowship between believers, and of therefore naming it *the communion*, there are not wanting reasons, and reasons of great weight, against it.

1. The word is ambiguous. In the apostolic age, it was applied to the *contributions* made by Christians in aid of their poorer brethren. "It hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia," says Paul, "to make a certain *contribution*, (*κοινωνία*,) for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem."¹ It was likewise applied to contributions for other purposes. In the third and fourth centuries, it was employed to designate *union in prayer*.² It was also used to desig-

¹Rom. xv. 26. ²Curtis on Communion, pp. 79, 80.

nate *the performance of ecclesiastical functions*.¹ And it is still constantly applied to other things besides the sacred Supper. We have communion with Christ, and with his people, in the proper observance of the ordinance of Baptism. Why, then, might not that divine rite, as well as the Supper, be called *the Communion*? The breadth and pliability of import and of application which pertain to this term, constitute, of themselves, a sufficient reason against the employment of it as *the fixed and special appellation* of the Supper, or, indeed, of any single rite or service. Such an unwise and illogical as well as unscriptural use of it, has caused the utmost confusion of ideas in the Christian world, and produced an incalculable amount of profitless and damaging discussion.

2. This term, as applied to the Lord's Supper, cannot, as we have seen, stand the test of the axiom laid down at the beginning of this discussion. It is not, as a name, strictly significant of the thing named. It does not properly represent and define it. Instead of

¹Hammond on the Canons, pp. 50, 51.

clearly expressing the one essential idea of the sacred rite, as *a commemoration of Christ*, his sufferings and death, and the great salvation achieved through them for his people, it obscures that idea. Nay, it substitutes for it *another* and totally *different* idea.

3. It involves the error of putting the *incidental* and the *accidental*, for the *necessary* and the *essential*—the error of putting the *special* for the *general*, the *particular* for the *universal*—the error of regarding *the celebration together*, by believers, of the Lord's Supper, which is, at best, but *a particular act* of fraternal love and mutual recognition, as *the one great all-embracing demonstration* of Christian fellowship and sympathy.

4. Exalting the united celebration of the Supper *above* all other exhibitions of such fellowship and sympathy, it most unreasonably, as well as unscripturally, makes it *the test of their value*. The sweetest and the noblest communion, is, as we have said, an active, intelligent, and voluntary exercise of the soul,—a matter of mental and spiritual

consciousness. Such communion is enjoyed in loving converse and companionship, and in a thousand acts of united work and worship. But all these, it appears, must go for nothing, if there be no united celebration of the Lord's Supper, no so-called "communion" at the table of the Lord.

5. While the partaking together of the holy feast, by those who celebrate it, is only *one* of the *many things* in which communion with Christ and with his people may be enjoyed, and by no means the chief, it is made, by the error in question, to *usurp and monopolize the character and appellation* properly pertaining to all the modes and forms of Christian communion.

6. The offspring of error, it has been itself fruitful of errors. It has led to grave mistakes respecting the *nature*, the *administration*, and the *proper participants* of the sacred Supper.

(a) Giving, as we have seen, in one aspect of the rite, exaggerated views of its observance, as a *mysterious* and *inexplicably* beneficial *communion with Christ*, the false name it

bears has led to administrations of the Supper, for which there is neither apostolic precept nor example. Representing it as possessed of essential intrinsic efficacy, and as being, in some sort, even *necessary to salvation*, that potent but erroneous appellation has led to *private* administrations of the ordinance to the aged and infirm, to the sick and the dying, who could not observe it publicly with the church, and to both public and private administrations of it, *as a means of saving grace* to the unregenerate and the unbelieving. In the early ages, the error which has enshrined itself in that false name, even led to the practice of a private *self-administration* of the rite. Basil the Great, living and writing in the fourth century, said that in emergencies, it was lawful for one to administer to himself the sacred elements—"to take *the communion* with his own hand."¹

As we have also seen, it has led, in connection with other hurtful influences, to greater

¹Basil, IV., 485—"Τὴν κοινωνίαν λαμβάνειν τῇ ἰδίᾳ χειρὶ."

evils still,—to the most monstrous extravagances and superstitions that could be conceived; to the Romish dogma of transubstantiation, with all the ridiculous and shocking mummeries and deadly errors of the “mass;” to the Lutheran dogma of “consubstantiation;” to the scarcely less absurd and preposterous conceits of Puseyism; as well as to all the errors of those, of whatever party, who suppose the simple rite to possess, *in itself*, a divine and saving efficacy.

(b) Regarding the rite, in another aspect of it, as essentially *an intercommunion of believers*, it has led, along with erroneous conceptions of the nature of the church, to a generally loose and lawless practice respecting it, which cannot, we think, be too deeply deprecated. It has been assumed that all who love the Lord, and who love each other, have *the right* to manifest their love at his table, without regard to any other supposed scriptural qualification. Hence, persons of all the Christian sects, and of no sect at all, have been often brought together promiscuously

to celebrate the holy ordinance. Thus has the rite which Christ bequeathed as a precious heritage to *his church alone*, been taken out of *the church*, and administered indiscriminately to heterogeneous masses of men without any proper ecclesiastical organization, to the subversion of order, and the sacrifice of the purity of the church.

(c) Combining and exaggerating both the classes of views just indicated, the error involved in the false appellation of the Supper, has sometimes led to *extraordinary celebrations* of it by *convocations* of men and women of various nationalities and sects, for which there is no scriptural warrant. Great mixed multitudes, without any proper church organization, improvise or elaborately arrange the most imposing observances of the simple *church* rite, as if they were *actual churches of Christ*, and even entitled to more than ordinary church privileges and honors.

To many, all this may seem broad, beautiful, and eminently Christian; but whatever of beauty there may be about it, is a false beauty—that of error rather than truth, of dis-

order rather than order ; its breadth, liberality, large-hearted charity, the product rather of human sentiment and conventional usage, than the fruit of the holy truth and the Holy Spirit of God, which, all-consistent and harmonious, can never be at issue with themselves.

7. The error under consideration, while assuming to *exalt*, really degrades the holy ordinance—while claiming to *honor*, it dishonors our Lord.

8. Inciting to unworthy clamors for the exhibition of a spurious liberality, it often leads to cruel misrepresentation of many of the most conscientious and faithful of the followers of Christ.

9. Ostensibly inspired by desire for harmony and peace, for love and sympathy, it often excites antipathies, and stirs up bitterness and strife, between those who are *brethren*, and should, at least, be *friends*.

10. In fine, failing to realize practically, the promised benefits of its theory, this great

error causes the world to scoff and gainsay, obstructs the propagation of the truth, retards the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, and hinders the salvation of perishing souls.

Thus have we shown, by numerous and weighty reasons, that, the prime object of the Lord's Supper being *to commemorate the sufferings and death of Christ on behalf of his people*, and not *to testify their fellowship with each other*, the holy rite is improperly called, *the Communion*.

If it be said that the establishment of this position, effects nothing in favor of those who advocate a restricted observance of the Supper, and nothing in the interest of an enlarged Christian charity, inasmuch as it only substitutes a *restricted commemoration* for a *restricted communion*, we reply—

First, that we are neither arguing particularly in the interest of a party, nor in that of a universal charity among the followers of Christ, whatever may be our own personal views and sympathies in those regards; but we are arguing specially in the interest of

what we esteem the truth, being fully assured that if the truth be vindicated and established, neither the interests of any party that deserves to be supported, nor those of universal Christian charity can be harmed, but that they will rather be strengthened and supported; for they all alike rest upon the truth.

Secondly, and specially, we reply that, as we have seen, the *enjoyment of Christian fellowship*, and the *commemoration of Christ*, are different things, and by no means co-extensive; that the former is vastly broader than the latter, and does not necessarily involve it; that one is a general *internal condition and state of the soul*, while the other is only a *particular outward action*; not different, as such, from a thousand other outward actions of believers, which are never thought of as tests of mutual recognition and fellowship, each one being performed under the *dictates of private judgment* according to ITS OWN LAW.

But this matter will be still clearer, and more satisfactory, when we consider, as we

now proceed to do, in the light of what has already been established, *the law* governing the celebration of the sacred Supper.



XV.

LAW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART I.

FROM the facts and principles set forth in the foregoing discussion, in which the Lord's Supper has been constantly regarded as primarily and essentially a feast in commemoration of Christ and his passion, and subordnately a feast of spiritual nutrition to those who worthily partake of it, the *law of the Lord's Supper*, may be readily determined. In the light of those facts and principles, we clearly see *for whom* the sacred feast was provided, and *who*, therefore, are—

1. Its *proper participants*. Having for its grand object, the commemoration by his people of their adored Lord, in his sufferings and death, as well as their own spiritual nourishment and support, it is obvious that they only can properly partake of it. They alone, enjoy

the supreme benefits of Christ's great sacrifice. They alone have a true appreciation of it, a genuine and abiding interest in it. For these reasons, they only are qualified intelligently and heartily to celebrate it. With all others, its observance is necessarily nothing more than an outward and lifeless formality, a heartless ceremonial.

But, to be a little more specific and particular, we remark, in view of the conclusions reached in the preceding discussion, that the proper participants of the Lord's Supper. are -

(a) *Those who love the Lord.* Only such can sincerely and becomingly commemorate him and his great redeeming work. Such were the constituents of his first church, the church of the apostles, by whom the holy rite was first celebrated.

(b) *Those who loyally obey him*—striving, honestly and habitually, to “walk in *all his ordinances and commandments* blameless.”

(c) *Those who are truly spiritual.* Such were those who first partook of the Lord's Supper. They were those, who, having been “born of

the Spirit," were "new creatures in Christ Jesus," and "partakers of the divine nature." Only such really love and loyally obey him. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."¹ Moreover, only spiritual persons can appropriate and receive profit from the spiritual nutriment furnished at the sacred feast. To all others, it would be unsuited and injurious. "The blood, which goes into the lungs a dark inert mass, poisoned with carbonic acid, comes from them of a bright scarlet, having parted with its poison, and absorbed the oxygen of the atmosphere. It is thus vitalized, and made capable of sustaining life. So in the gospel the sacraments need to be vitalized by a living faith, in the experience of each professor, without which they only carry with them poison and death into every ramification of the spiritual system to which they extend."²

As we have in another place intimated, some have recommended the holy rite as a means of grace to the unregenerate and the unbe-

¹Rom. viii., 7. ²Curtis' Prog. Bap. Princ., p. 74.

lieving. Others have administered it, we have also said, as the means of salvation to the sick and the dying. Both these classes of teachers, misapprehend the real nature and design of the ordinance, and egregiously pervert it. Neither reason nor scripture sanctions their teachings. Such teachings may be prompted by zeal, but it is "zeal without knowledge." They may be inspired by humane and generous feeling, but it is feeling neither produced nor guided by a just appreciation of divine truth, or by a proper estimate of man's essential character and real condition.

Though in another place he teaches, with strange inconsistency, a different doctrine, Knapp, after speaking of the Supper as "a significant sermon on *the death of Jesus*," is constrained, by the force of truth, which he manifestly loves, and which, for the most part, he ably advocates, to say that the Supper "requires, in order to a *proper celebration* of it, a *personal experience* of the benefits of this death."¹

¹Christ. Theol., p. 499

The Lord's Supper, though involving the use of physical elements, is a symbolic *spiritual* rite. What congeniality, then, can the carnal heart have with it? What susceptibility of impression by it? What power of appreciation and appropriation of its benefits? Can the mere material substances of bread and wine, received by the dying unbeliever, alter his spiritual character or state? Can these substances, received by the carnal man, whether sick or in health, inspire the heart that is enmity against God, with a true and supreme love for him? What talismanic power of matter over mind, surpassing all the wonders of Greek or Arabian fiction, were this! What a mighty and marvelous *opus operatum*!

XVI.

LAW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART II.

PERSONS having the qualities above indicated, in order to be rightful participants of the Lord's Supper, must also be –

(d) *Members of the visible church.* Whilst it is clear, from the essential nature and design of the Lord's Supper, as we have considered it, that only the *real followers of Christ* are entitled to the privileges of the sacred feast, it is also clear, from the simple scriptural account which we have given of its first celebration, that it is designed for them, even, only in an *organized or church* capacity. Jesus instituted the Supper with his twelve apostles. As a sort of close corporation, they have sometimes been called *the college* of apostles. We have no objection to the term. They were a college. But that college was also

a church. It was *the first* church—the church instituted by Christ himself, and over which he personally presided. Its constituents were his ἐκκλησία, his little but divinely honored assembly, called out by himself from the rest of men, to be about him, devoutly to worship him, to observe his ordinances, to transact the business of his kingdom, to establish it, and to extend it throughout the world.

Having adduced weighty and conclusive evidence to prove that the apostles had been previously baptized, Wiberg says—“That the eleven at the institution of the Supper, composed a Christian church, is also certain. By a church of Christ is meant, according to the Augsburg Confession, Art. 7th., ‘a congregation of holy persons, in which the gospel is rightly taught, and the sacraments rightly administered.’ Now we ask, Was not the gospel rightly taught by our Lord and Master? Were not the disciples rightly baptized, and did they not receive the true Supper from its Institutor? As this cannot be denied, it follows that the Supper, even on this occasion,

was celebrated in common by a regular church of Christ.”¹

There were other disciples besides the apostles; “above five hundred,” Paul tells us.² But they were not *formally* connected with the apostles as a body, a church. Those disciples loved their Lord. Many of them would have died for him. But they were, as yet, unorganized, and without the pale of the church visible. Hence they were not at the Supper. Not even Mary, the mother of Jesus, nor the other holy women who so devoutly and lovingly ministered to him, nor the seraphic Stephen, probably already a believer,³ and soon—after sealing his glorious testimony with his blood—to follow his divine Lord into his heavenly kingdom.

Subsequently, these disciples were organized, by union with the church of the apostles, which constituted with them the church at Jerusalem. Then, at once, as *formal* and

¹Christ. Bap., pp. 295, 296. ²1 Cor., xv., 6.

³Epiphanius, it is said, with whom Fleming, in his Christology, agrees, regarded him as one of the “Seventy.”

regular members of the church, they partook of the Supper of the Lord, commemorating, *with the apostles*, his sufferings and death, in the manner, and for the purpose, which he had prescribed. They assembled on the first day of the week, and on other occasions—daily, indeed, at first—to worship him, and to break the bread which represented his body broken for them, and to drink the wine which symbolized his blood shed on their behalf.

We never, however, read of *a portion of them*, whether large or small, coming together *apart from the organized body, the church proper*, to solemnize the Supper. It was not then, nor is it now, competent for two, or ten, half a hundred, or more, professed believers, casually coming together, to improvise, if we may so speak, a celebration of the holy rite. Neither was it then, nor is it now, competent for the administrators of the rite, to give the holy Supper to *individuals or companies* of their brethren, *apart from the church*.

Referring to the account given of the Lord's Supper, by those early fathers, Justin and Irenæus, and to the origin of the practice

by private parties, and by individuals absent from the formal celebration of the rite by the church, of partaking of "elements previously consecrated" *in the church*, Neander says—"The idea *at bottom*, was, that a communion could properly have its right significance, *only in the midst of a church*; the communion of persons absent, of individuals, was to be considered, therefore, as only *a continuation of that communion of the whole body of the church.*"¹

Christ, Creator and upholder of all things, has established perfect system and order throughout his vast material realm, and they are always maintained. Can anything less be expected in his more glorious spiritual realm? Having established a sublime, however simple and outwardly humble rite, to be observed by his people, throughout all generations, in loving memory of himself, he left it not without fixed and clearly defined law, to protect it from neglect and corruption, irregularity and disorder.

¹Hist. Ch. Rel. and Ch., vol. 1, p. 332—note.

LAW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART III.

HAVING seen that in consonance with the nature and design of the Lord's Supper, as we have viewed it, the true people of God are the only rightful participants of it; and that even they, as isolated individuals, or loose, unorganized, promiscuous companies, cannot properly partake of it, but can do so, in an orderly and decorous manner, according to the teachings of Christ and his apostles, only as *an organized body* or *church*, we see, in the light of the same divine teaching, who are the *proper constituents* of such a body, and therefore qualified and entitled to participate of the sacred Supper. They are—

(e) *Baptized believers*—those who, having believed in Christ, have publicly confessed him, and taken the *outward* as well as inward

posture and character of his friends and followers ; those who, assuming *the badge* of the Christian brotherhood, *the uniform* of the soldiery of the great Captain, have “put him on in baptism”—those, in a word, who, upon a credible profession of justifying faith, have been baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Such were the first participants of the rite ; the constituents of the first church, the church of the apostles.

The church of Christ is spoken of in the New Testament as a body, of which he is the head, and of which he is also the informing soul. Indeed, the union between him and his people is regarded as so close and intimate, that they are constantly represented as one. They are assimilated to him, spiritually homogeneous with him, have his mind, breathe his spirit. Having been “accepted in the Beloved,” they are loyal to him as their King, obedient to him as their Master, faithful to him as their Friend. Such were those who composed the church personally constituted by Christ himself, and of which he was the divine Pastor. They gave every

evidence that was possible, of their devotion and consecration to him. They left all and followed him; they encountered hardship and toil for him; they did lovingly and loyally all that he bade them do; they braved persecution, peril and death for him.

John, the harbinger of Jesus, had bidden men repent and be baptized, believing on him who was to come. Multitudes obeyed him. Some of the apostles, as is generally conceded, were of the number, and there is reason for believing that others, if not all, were. Robert Hall, speaking of the apostles, in connection with this matter, but denying that John's and Christian baptism were identical, says—"It is almost certain that some, probably most of them, had been baptized by John."¹

But, if any of them immediately obeyed not John, there is still no reason to question the fact of their baptism. We know that Christ preached substantially as John preached, and like him baptized; that he everywhere

¹Hall's Works, vol. 1, p. 303.

commanded men not only to repent and believe the gospel, but also to be baptized; and that he, through his disciples, actually administered the rite to great multitudes—to more even than did John. Would he fail to urge upon his chosen and most highly favored ones, the sacred duties he so strenuously enjoined upon others? Or, would they, who had shown, as we have seen, such wondrous devotion, resist his will in respect to *any* of his injunctions; and, especially, while so earnestly pressing those injunctions upon others, as they all unquestionably did. No one can believe it. He bade *all men* repent, believe, and be baptized. He said to his apostles, in giving them the great commission—“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I have commanded you*: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”¹ Or, as it is rendered by Mark—“Go ye into all the

¹Matt., xxviii., 19, 20.

world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”¹ Now, the *principle* of the commision, as it respects baptism, was ever the same. It applied *before* the formal annunciation of that great charter, as well as *after* it; at the *beginning* of Christ’s ministry, as well as at its *close*. It bound the *earlier disciples* of Jesus, as well as those of *a later day*. None accepted and submitted to the will of their divine Lord, whether formally or informally expressed, with greater alacrity than did the apostles. None were wiser than they. And they would not fail to add to the force of *their precepts* respecting baptism, the weight of *their own example*.

“When our Lord himself,” says Wiberg, “submitted to baptism in order to ‘fulfill all righteousness;’ when he at the same time declared that his followers, together with him, ought to fulfill the same righteousness, or all the *several appointments* of the heavenly Father; when he, too, declared that baptism was a

¹Mark, xvi., 15, 16.

part of the 'counsel of God,' and expressed his sore displeasure with such as 'rejected this counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized' of John, (Luke viii. 30); when John the Baptist 'was sent from God, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord,' (Luke i. 17, John i. 6), and for this purpose 'baptized with the baptism of repentance,' (Acts xix. 4); when the *first* disciples of Christ also had been the disciples of John. (John i. 37, Acts i. 22); and when they themselves, on the command of our Saviour, baptized others—is it indeed *conceivable* that they would have *neglected* or *refused to be baptized*."¹

The objection sometimes urged, that the baptism of John, and even that of Christ himself, (through his disciples), was not *Christian* baptism, has always seemed to us most singular and unreasonable, and utterly without weight. Dagg, speaking of this matter, says—"The first Supper was administered to the apostles. Some of these had been baptized

¹Christ. Bap., pp. 294, 295.

by John; and since the disciples made by Jesus in his personal ministry, were also baptized, we are warranted to conclude that all the apostles had been baptized. If it be denied that John's baptism, and the baptism administered under the immediate direction of Christ, during his personal ministry, were Christian baptism, we call for proof. * * When Paul was made an apostle, before he entered on his work, he was commanded to be baptized. From some cause, the other apostles were not under this obligation. We account for the difference, by the supposition that they had *already received* what was *substantially the same* as the baptism administered to Paul."¹

To the same purport is the language of the distinguished German theologian, Knapp, whom we have already, in other connections, several times cited. "The *practice* of the first Christian church," says he, "confirms the point that the baptism of John was considered essentially the same with Christian baptism. For those who acknowledged that they had professed, by the baptism of John, to be-

¹Manual of Theology, Part II., pp. 214, 215.

lieve in Jesus as the Christ, and who in consequence of this had become, in fact, his disciples, and had believed in him, were not, in a single instance, baptized again into Christ, because this was considered as having been already done. Hence we do not find that any apostle, or any other disciple of Jesus, was the second time baptized; not even that Apollos mentioned in Acts xviii. 25, because he had before believed in Jesus as Christ, although he had received only the baptism of John.”¹

To the above cited authorities, of the highest class, which might be increased indefinitely, we add the great name of Turretin, whose works are amongst the ablest of the learned productions of the seventeenth century, and a standard in some of our best theological institutions. He maintains, with great learning and force of argument, that “the baptism of John was the same essentially with that of Christ,” or Christian baptism.²

¹Christ. Theol., p. 485.

²Op., tom. III., De Bap., Quæst. xvi., *passim*. Edinburgh Ed.

Thus we see that the members of Christ's first church, as constituted by Himself, were all *baptized believers*. The later members of that church were like their elder brethren. So were those of all the other churches constituted by the apostles and their coadjutors.

The divine record assures us that they repented, believed, and were baptized; then were added to the company of the disciples, that is, were received into the church; then broke bread with their brethren, in the regular and formal observance of the Lord's Supper.

That this was the invariable order of procedure, is so clear to every earnest and thoughtful reader of the New Testament, that we think it wholly unnecessary to attempt any formal proof, or to fortify our statement by quotations from the sacred record.

Now, the apostolic churches are the acknowledged models of all properly constituted churches. Such churches, therefore, whenever or wherever established, are composed of *baptized believers*.

From the very nature and design of the

Lord's Supper, then, as understood by those among whom it was first established, and by whom it was first observed, it is clear that none can, in an orderly and scriptural manner, celebrate the holy rite, but *the true followers of Christ, constituted into regular churches*. And it is equally clear that none can be constituted into such churches, but those who have been *baptized*, upon a profession of faith, by a duly qualified administrator of the rite. From all which, it is obvious, that none but baptized believers, formally connected with the church, can properly partake of the Supper of the Lord. "To every man, who contents himself with a plain view of the subject," says that eminent Presbyterian theologian, Dr. Dick, "and has no purpose to serve by subtleties and refinements, it will appear that baptism is as much the initiating ordinance of the Christian, as circumcision was of the Jewish dispensation. An uncircumcised man was not permitted to eat the passover, and an unbaptized man should not be permitted to partake of the eucharist."¹

¹Lectures on Theology, vol. 2, p. 421.

Baptism, thus going before the celebration of the sacred Supper, according to *scriptural order*, also precedes it, in *the very nature of things*. Baptism symbolizes regeneration, the new birth, *the beginning of the new spiritual life*. The Lord's Supper symbolizes *the continued nourishment and support of that life*. As, therefore, birth naturally precedes the nourishment and support of life, so baptism naturally precedes participation of the Lord's Supper.

That the baptism which the first followers of Christ received, was *immersion*, is clear from the force of the Greek terms expressive of the rite, and of its administration; from the circumstances, clearly implying immersion, attending its observance in the apostolic age; from the symbolic import of the rite, as a death, burial, and resurrection; from the practice of all Christendom for many ages; from that of the Greek church of our own times, whose language, though much modified by time, is substantially that in which the New Testament was written; and, finally, from the common consent of the ablest and most learned men, of both ancient and modern times.

XVIII.

LAW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART IV.

IN the light of our discussion we further see what are—

2. The *essential circumstances* of a true scriptural observance of the rite. Such observance is the simple reception, by baptized believers, of bread and wine—fittingly representing the body of Jesus broken, and his blood shed for them—the reception not of *bread alone*, as by the popish laity, in the unworthy observance of a sacrilegiously mutilated rite; but the reception of *both* the blessed symbols, *the bread and the wine*, representing, in their united and divine significance, the very substance and vital principle of the whole Christ, the whole human and Divine Being.

The reception of these significant and striking symbols—

(a) *In the church publicly assembled.* And where else than among those who constitute the church, which is *his body*; and by whom else than by those who are the very members of his body, and for whom his life was offered up, should they be received?

(b) Not *in private houses* by *individual believers*, or by *companies* of *Christians apart from the church*, even though they be members of it. The Christian pastor may not administer the sacred elements, *privately*, to one or more members of his flock, even though they be aged or invalid believers, unable to attend upon the public ministrations of the sanctuary; to one in imminent danger of death; or to a few Christian individuals transiently sojourning, or permanently residing, in a private family, unless they there constitute *a church*, like that in Aquila and Priscilla's, or Nymphas' house. Christ will, himself, visit the poor, and the sick, and the dying, and the strangers within

his gates, when they call upon him; and succor, and solace, and save them. He will come to them, and "sup with them," in their own homes, and bless them with as sweet and rich a feast as any which they could enjoy, formally, with their brethren, "in the midst of the great congregation."

But the observance of Christ's ordinances is to be regarded, not so much as a matter of personal *gratification*, as of personal *obligation*; not so much as a spiritual *luxury* furnished for our *enjoyment*, as a spiritual *aliment*, prescribed and prepared, under proper conditions, for our *nourishment*. If one is *unable*, from the force of circumstances which he cannot control, to receive the rite of baptism in *the manner* in which it has been divinely appointed to be received, he is free from its obligation altogether, and may dispense even with its benefits. He is not required to submit to some *modification* of it, that may be more convenient. "After baptism, in itself considered, and simply as an *opus operatum*," says Knapp, "came to be regarded as essential to salvation, the question

was started—Whether, in the want of water, baptism could be performed with any other material; e. g., wine, milk, or sand? The question must be answered in the negative, since to do this would be contrary to the institution of Christ. For any one to be prevented, necessarily, from being baptized, does not subject him to condemnation, but only the wilful and criminal refusal of this rite.”¹

The same law holds in respect to the Lord's Supper. Nothing can be substituted for the bread that appropriately represents Christ's body, nothing for the wine that symbolizes his blood. When these cannot be obtained, the obligation to observe the ordinance ceases, so long as the insuperable difficulty remains. And so, too, if from *enforced absence*, through sickness, the infirmities of age, or any other cause, a member of the church be unable to participate, *with the church*, in the observance of the sacred rite, he incurs no guilt from its non-observance. And though he may suffer some loss of per-

¹Christ. Theol., p. 486.

sonal enjoyment, and perhaps of substantial profit, through the disability that deprives him of participation, with his brethren, in the joyous feast, he may not *indemnify himself* for the loss, by a violation of the law and order of God's house, in *privately* and *irregularly* partaking of the sacred elements.

Although "the obligation of keeping the passover—the type of the Lord's Supper—was so strict, that whoever should neglect it was condemned to death, (Numb. ix., 13)," yet "those who had any lawful impediment, as a journey, sickness, or uncleanness, voluntary or involuntary," might "defer its celebration till the second month of the ecclesiastical year;" when they might be able to observe it, according to its prescribed conditions.¹

The first Supper, we have seen, was celebrated *in the church*, and by *its members alone*—not even the mother of Jesus, or the other holy women who so loved and served him, or the seventy evangelists whom he had sent forth to propagate his gospel, being invited to it. And, as we have also seen, there is

¹Enc. Rel. Knowl., Art. Passover.

no instance, in the apostolic age, of its being observed by others than *members of the church*; or by them, *apart from the church*. For any different practice, there is neither apostolic precept nor example. Such practice rests, in so far as it prevails at all, upon nothing better than mere human theories' and sympathies, inspired by misconception of the nature and design of the blessed ordinance; mingled, in many instances, with a misleading and deeply harmful superstition.

(c) Not—apart from the church, as such—in *public convocations*, made up of mixed multitudes from all quarters of the land, even though they love the Lord Jesus, and have assembled to concert measures for the advancement of the interests of his kingdom in the world. The Lord's Supper is not to be carried *out of the church*. Beyond its sacred precincts, his table is not to be spread. Such a *convocation*, though it may be very august and imposing, though it may consist of members of the churches, and include their greatest and most illustrious leaders, is not

itself *a church*. And there is no more disparagement of those who compose such a body, in withholding the Lord's Supper from them, than there was disparagement of the "Seventy," when Christ withheld from them, (as not formal members of the church which he had organized), the sacred symbols of his body and blood.

Doubtless it might sometimes have been agreeable to the ancient Israelites, in some of their more warmly patriotic, and fraternal, and festive moods, to celebrate the feast of the passover, (especially on extraordinary occasions,) in larger and more promiscuous companies than those of the private families, to which its observance was confined, and in a more public and imposing way than that prescribed by the law of Moses. But, loyal to the divine authority under which they were placed, they never felt justified in taking such a liberty with the holy rite. They never so perverted it as to carry it *out of the family*, (beautiful image of the church,) or otherwise materially departed from its divinely-appointed conditions. Shall Christians,

professing a heartier and more intelligent loyalty towards their Lord, than his ancient people usually displayed, be less submissive to divine law, less observant of divine order, in respect to the Lord's Supper, than were those "stiff-necked" ancient people, in respect to the feast which was but *the shadow* of the richer one ordained by Christ?



XIX.

LAW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART V.

JUST views of the Lord's Supper, enabling us to determine its *proper participants*, and the *essential circumstances* of its administration, enable us also to determine—

3. The rightful *custodians* and *administrators* of the rite.

There are those who think that Christ left his church without a fixed and determinate polity. But we cannot suppose that he, who is the wisest of law-givers and rulers, would set up the most important establishment ever erected on the earth, and leave the conservation of its character, the preservation of its integrity, and the administration of its affairs, to be determined, without well-defined law, and clearly

designated administrators of that law, by the infirmities of human character and temper, and by the ever-fluctuating states and conditions of human society. Human governors are wiser than that. The wisdom of the Divine Governor surely does not fall below the human standard. Immutable law, perfect order, as we have said, in another connection, reign throughout Jehovah's natural kingdom. There is perfect adjustment of means to ends. Every necessary agent is appointed, its place fixed, its functions defined, the proper relations, gradations, and inter-dependencies, all determined. A wise system of supremacy on the one hand, and of subordination on the other, is established and uniformly maintained. And so, whether it be always recognized or not, is it in his spiritual kingdom. The church is a body constituted and governed upon well established and ascertainable principles, though, like those of the natural world, some of them may, at times, elude the view of those who do not diligently search for them. The character of the constituent elements of the

church, the position, duties, and qualifications of its officers, are defined; its true sphere assigned, its functions determined, the law of its life fixed, the spirit and the modes of its operation indicated, and the rules, by which it is to be guided and controlled, authoritatively announced.

Christ having made his church the pillar and ground of his truth, has committed that truth, with all the ordinances of his house, to her charge. She is its depositary and custodian. For fidelity to her precious trust, he holds her to a high and solemn accountability. He gave her, at the first, his holy Supper; saying to those, who, as her proper constituents, partook of the divine repast, *Do this*, in remembrance of me; for as often as *ye* eat this bread and drink this cup, *ye* do show the Lord's death, *till he come*. Thus did he give the rite to them and their rightful successors, *in perpetuity*. Theirs at the first, it is theirs still, a sacred charge, an inalienable possession.

Having said that "baptism and the Lord's Supper are committed to the custody and

guardianship of the visible churches of Christ, as such, which are the trustees, the administrators of these ordinances, by a divine appointment." Prof. Curtis proceeds further to remark—"It must be quite evident that they are committed to the care of *some* agents. They are not simply enjoined in the Bible, and left without any to defend them against abuses and attacks, or to exhibit their divine authority, and the duty of submitting to them, none being responsible for administering them to proper subjects, and to those alone. On whom does this responsibility officially devolve? We know that one important duty of the visible churches of Christ is to uphold the doctrines of the gospel, and to spread them before the whole world. It is thus that they exhibit their character, as the golden candlesticks supporting the light of divine truth in the world, trimmed and filled with the oil of grace by the hand of Christ himself. But is it only doctrines that give light? Is there nothing luminous in the ordinances of the gospel? To whom, then, is the maintenance of these institutions to be

committed? Whose duty is it to uphold and to administer them but those churches of Christ regularly constituted, according to the institutions of the gospel?"¹

But the church has divinely-appointed officers, through whom she acts. The chief of these are her *bishops* or *pastors*. They are her *ministers*. It is their function, as the servants of Christ, and the servants of his church, to dispense the truth, and to administer the ordinances. To them, as the representatives of Christ, the exponents of his character and offices, the expounders of his word, and the administrators of the rites which he has instituted, is assigned the honor of presiding at the sacred Supper, and of dispensing to their brethren, the heavenly viands of their Master's board; as, to them, and to them only, is assigned the duty and the honor of administering the kindred rite of baptism. "In the ancient Christian church, the Lord's Supper was as regularly administered by the teachers, as baptism. Justin

¹Progress of Baptist Principles, pp. 296, 297.

the martyr, (Apol. i. 85, *seq.*,) says that the *προεστῶτες*, (heads of affairs,)—*the bishops or pastors*—consecrated and distributed the elements; and Tertullian, (De Cor. Mil.,) says, "*Nec de aliorum manu quam praesidentium sumimus*"—"We do not receive [the elements] from the hand of others than the presiding officers"—*the bishops or pastors*.¹

No private member, or deacon, even, may, then, administer the sacred rite, unless under extraordinary circumstances, especially appointed by the church, in which case he should be regarded as, for the time, endowed with pastoral functions.

The Lord's Supper, committed, at the first, to the apostolic church, remains with her still, a precious possession, a sacred trust. Although sometimes obscured by the thick clouds of her "great tribulation," that beauteous "bride of heaven," that glorious "spouse of Christ," is still in the world, brightened, as well as purified, by her "martyrs' fires;" strengthened by her hard and trying disci-

¹ Knapp's Christ. Theol., p. 503.

pline. Against her the gates of hell have never ceased to wage furious warfare. But they have not prevailed. She is invincible. Onset after onset, against her heaven-constructed bulwarks, has been beaten back. They are impregnable. Greater is He that is for her, than all they that are against her. And, at the last, he will bring her triumphant and all-glorious out of the fierce conflict. Right faithfully, by His grace, has she clung to and preserved the heavenly treasure committed to her trust, through fire and flood; through terrible tempests of persecution—confiscation of goods, banishment, imprisonments, tortures, blood and death. Let the memory of the past, give hope and inspiration for the future." Having loved His own, He will love them to the end.

Whatever the pressure of misrepresentation, reproach, obloquy, her children may have to bear, for fidelity to their adored Lord, to his truth, and to the ordinances of his house, let them not be discouraged; but, possessing themselves in faith and patience, let them remember that for Him and for them, their saintly and

heroic fathers endured immensely more, and yet were sustained. And so, emulating those of whom the world was not worthy, let them “keep the ordinances,” as they have been delivered unto them; keep them in their divine purity and integrity, in their divine *idea*, in their very NAME—as important to the just conception and faithful conservation of that idea—in fine, keep them in all their celestial beauty and completeness, and in all their scriptural requisitions.



CORRECTION OF THE MISNOMER.

THOSE Christian people, who, in our judgment, have been most scriptural and consistent in their principle and practice respecting the Lord's Supper, have encountered great reproach, because of their very devotion to truth and duty, in this regard. And we cannot too much admire the Christian manliness with which they have withstood the formidable *odium theologicum* thus incurred. The unscriptural and unreasonable notions engendered and propagated by the erroneous appellation of the sacred Supper, to which we so strongly demur, have greatly increased that odium. They have presented those faithful followers of Christ in the false light of seeming to withhold, with selfish and bigoted exclusiveness, *all Christian recognition and communion* from others, while, in fact, with broad and generous charity, they extend to them a warm

and hearty sympathy, in all matters of common Christian faith and practice, join with them in a thousand acts of personal fellowship, and united service of their common Lord, and only make a firm and consistent *practical* protest, as well as theoretical, against what they conscientiously believe to be their errors.

Let, then, those especially, who have suffered so much from the improper application of a noble term, do all they can to correct and remedy it. Let them, so far as may be practicable, disuse and banish from their theological and ecclesiastical vocabulary, the erroneous and unfortunate designation. Very justly has it been said, that "words are things." Most potent things, indeed, they are. They embody and perpetuate, they clothe and send forth, the "*ideas*," that "rule the world." They are, in the words of the great Dramatist, "the very coinage of the brain." They carry with them, all that is strongest and most sublimated in the soul. Justly says Isaac Barrow, himself a masterly user of words, because a masterly thinker—"There

is a *strange enchantment in words*; which, being (although with no great color of reason), assumed, do work on the fancies of men, especially of the weaker sort. * * Words, innocently or carelessly used, are, by interpretation, extended to signify great matters, or *what you please*.”¹ With words, “bless we God, even the Father;” and with words, “curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.”² And, because they render the whole soul, mind and heart, Jesus says—“By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”³ Reverently addressing God, the Psalmist says—“Thou hast *magnified thy word* above all thy name.”⁴ And when the infinite, invisible, incomprehensible God, would render himself to men, and to angels, and to the whole universe, he incarnated his Son, under the title of his “Word”—the transcendent, all-glorious “Logos”—the expression of the Divine Reason, and Love, and Power, and whole Per-

¹Barrow's Works, vol. 3, Treat. of Pope's Suprem., p. 201, and p. 200. ²James iii., 9. ³Matt. xii., 37.

⁴Ps. cxxxviii. 2.

sonality.¹ Oh, words! they are the great power of earth and heaven. By them, both were made. By them, both consist. They fill the skies with light and joy. They fill earth with truth or falsehood, love or hate.

That word, so full of the divine amenities and sweetest sympathies of the soul, so full of its noblest charities, so redolent of friendship and of brotherliness, of tenderness and love, that—as we have already so often called it—beautiful word, “communion,” has cast a spell upon the Christian world, a spell that it will be hard, if possible, ever to break. Like many another lovely and seductive form, it has led away captive, those who have been too much enamored of it, into temptation, and error, and sin. With a voice bewitching as that of the syren on the enchanted isle of Calypso, whose resistless fascination, as the poets tell us, lured many a hapless mariner from his true bearings, into the maelstroms of deceitful seas, or into the no less treacherous and destructive vortices of an illicit

¹ Jno. i. 14; 1 Tim. iii., 6.

love, it has charmed many a susceptible and enthusiastic Christian, glowing with all the warmth of a universal sympathy, from the divinely-ordained order and decorum of the church of God, into a looseness and lawlessness of procedure, as injurious to that, as it is dishonoring to Him. Because of its unwarranted, unscriptural, often uncharitable, and, we fear, sometimes sinister use, in connection with the most touching and affecting ordinance of God's house, that sweet and beautiful word has been, we honestly believe, more hurtful to the honor and highest interests of that house, more damaging and weakening to those most devoted to it, than many an infidel sophist, or malignant persecutor.

The *distinctive principles* of those followers of Christ, who more strictly than many others construe the word of God, and, we think, more vigilantly and faithfully guard the ordinances, find general favor, under auspicious circumstances, and make rapid progress among the people, unless forestalled, or otherwise obstructed, by outward and untoward influences. See how, in the first age, despite the leagued

opposition of human and of diabolical enemies, they overspread the world! See how, under the happy auspices of American liberty, they have advanced in our own land! And no wonder! For those principles are the noblest and divinest that have ever been promulgated among men, and should be unspeakably dear to every human heart. They appeal with the utmost eloquence and force to the deepest and strongest sentiments of our nature.

That we may have a proper appreciation of the position and spirit of those who have always held them, and of their relation to the leading ideas and general purpose of this whole discussion, let us briefly glance at those principles. For the sake of greater symmetry of statement and a somewhat broader and more satisfactory view, we include with the more specially *distinctive* principles, some held in common with other evangelical Christians; but, we think, far more *purely* and *consistently*.

1. *Justification by Faith without the Deeds of the Law.* Man, originally made in the image of God, "created in righteousness and true

holiness," fell, by his own unconstrained volition, by his own free act, from his high estate, lost the image and spirit of God, and became a sinner; a sinner in a double sense—a sinner in that he was *depraved* in nature, and a sinner in that he was an actual *transgressor* of the law. As such a sinner, he is, himself being judge, justly condemned. His own conscience is a swift witness against him. He can do nothing to recover and save himself. His most perfect righteousness, the inspired prophet tells us, is no better than "filthy rags." In infinite mercy, God has made provision for his recovery and restoration. To his rescue, he has sent *Jesus*—the "*Saviour of his people from their sins.*" Acceptance of his proffered intervention, is all that is necessary. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."¹ Salvation, utterly unattainable by any human or finite effort, impossible to "works," is thus made possible to "faith"—simple *heart-trust* in Jesus.

¹ Jno. iii. 16.

2. *The Utility of Good Works.* While these can effect nothing for the salvation of the sinner, which is accomplished by grace alone; yet, as *the fruits of faith*, they are well pleasing unto God, and profitable unto men. “This is a faithful saying,” writes the great apostolic champion of justification by faith alone, to Titus, “and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”¹ To the Hebrews he says—“But, to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for, with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.”² And, beautifully blending the principles of faith and of works, and showing the true connection of the one with the other, he says to the Ephesians—“For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, which God hath

¹Tit. iii. 8. ²Heb. xiii. 16.

before ordained that we should walk in them.”¹

3. *The All-sufficiency as a Rule of Faith and Practice of the Holy Scriptures.* As a spiritual being, man needs and longs for a divine and unerring spiritual directory. His fellows, he well knows, are unable to furnish it. He sees that the best of them are frail and fallible like himself. Upon the foundation of sand, laid by mere human speculation and philosophy, he is conscious that he can have no firm, unyielding footing. He sighs for the solid, everlasting rock, on which to plant his feet. This, he intuitively perceives, and instinctively feels, that only a Being infinitely purer and wiser than man himself, can give him. And, however “slow of heart to believe,” he recognizes in the *Bible*—which, like the sun, is its own demonstration—that unyielding, everlasting rock; that rock which shall stand, though the earth and the heavens pass away.

Upon this broad and stable foundation, the advocates of the all-sufficiency of the holy Scriptures build—not at all upon the shifting

¹Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10.

sands of tradition, the conflicting testimony of the so called Fathers, the decrees of Councils, or upon any mere human creeds or dogmas whatever. Their motto is—"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."¹ They believe that the Bible was given to no favored sacerdotal class, to be authoritatively interpreted by them, and dogmatically enforced upon the people; but that it was given to the whole people themselves, *as individuals*, to be interpreted, with the aid of all accessible helps, by each one for himself; and that each one is solemnly responsible for the proper use of this high and glorious privilege.

4. *The Right of Private Judgment.* As God has given the holy Scriptures—divinely adapted to universal man—not to any one nation, or generation, or class of men, but to every individual man, of all generations, and countries, and classes, it follows, that to each one

¹Is. viii. 20.

belongs the honor, and attaches the responsibility, of a personal interpretation *for himself*, and application *to himself*, of their teachings. Such interpretation and application cannot be made for him by others. "Every one of us," says the inspired apostle, "shall give account of himself unto God."¹ Again he says—"Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden."² Yet again—"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master, he standeth or falleth."³ While each one may, and should avail himself of all the assistance, whether of men, of books, or of other things, which he can command, he must, with the divine guidance promised every honest earnest seeker after truth, rely mainly upon himself. He may appropriate the intellect, the piety, the scholarship, and the research of others, but he may not enslave himself to them. They can give him no *infallible exposition*, no

¹Rom. xiv. 12. ²Gal. vi. 4, 5. ³Rom. xiv. 4.

authorative interpretation. They are not his masters. God has exerted his infinite wisdom, and given his quickening, illumining, and guiding Spirit, to make plain his will to the meanest capacity; so that he that runneth may read, and that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. He has, in addition, thrown about each man, a thousand other helpful appliances to a right understanding of his sacred word. And while no man may abnegate either his own personal rights or personal duties, respecting it; no church, no pope, no college of cardinals, no council, can divest or relieve him of them. The individual man's own rights and personal obligations are absolutely inalienable. As he cannot perform his personal duties by proxy, cannot transfer his personal responsibilities to another, so no other can rightfully take from him the God-given means of discharging them.

5. *The Freedom and Inviolability of Conscience.*

Conscience is God's vicegerent in the human heart. To attempt to coerce and arbitrarily control it, is *sacrilege*. God himself never subjects it to compulsion. Freedom is

its very birth-right. With that freedom, "soul-liberty," as Roger Williams so happily called it, no earthly power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, can intermeddle. Its privileges and immunities none can annul or infringe.

6. *The Independence of the Individual Churches.* If the individual man, exercising the right of private judgment, and following the deductions of his own reason, embrace certain dogmas, and cannot rightly be compelled to relinquish or modify them; so, neither can two, twenty, an hundred or more such individuals, embracing those, or other dogmas, and associating themselves together for their maintenance and propagation, be required to yield or change them. The private judgment of a single individual being respected, his conscientious convictions held inviolable, the judgment and conscience of a number of individuals constituting a church, must be, *a fortiori*, respected and held inviolable. Such a body is not to be controlled, or interfered with, by another and stronger church, or confederation of churches, by any hierarchy, or other power at all, lower than that of God.

He, even, as we have said, never resorts to moral compulsion, or, in any way, abridges the liberty of human souls. Persecution for conscience' sake, is foreign from and utterly abhorrent to the divine principles and spirit of Christianity. Not only so; it is foreign from and abhorrent to sound sense and sound philosophy. To use the homely, but witty, words of Butler, satirizing the bigots of his time, men cannot

“--Prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks.”¹

7. *The Mutual Independence of Church and State.* Both church and state are divine institutions. The functions of the one are *spiritual*. The functions of the other are *temporal*. It would not be proper to say that the one is relatively *superior*, or *inferior*, to the other. In its sphere, under God, each is supreme. They are strictly *co-ordinate*. The state is necessary to the church. The church is necessary to the state. And this, because man is a two-fold being—temporal and spiritual, civil and religious.

¹Hudibras, Part I., Cant. 1, 199, 200.

When church and state keep to their own proper departments, each faithfully fulfilling its own special duties, the one never invading the domain of the other, the highest interests of both are promoted. They may, and ought, to act in *true alliance* with each other. They were ordained of God for such alliance, and may maintain it, without disturbing their individual character or integrity. But when they closely coalesce and blend their functions, as, alas! the church, (so-called), and the state have often done, each loses its own distinctive character, its proper individuality; ceases to be what God designed it, and both together become a hybrid power, utterly anomalous in the economy of the gospel, and often the direst curse and scourge to the human race. To both, as distinct and separate, every good Christian is loyal—"rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." But, when earthly rulers assume to "lord it over God's heritage," and to take the place of Jesus as the supreme head of the church, then all loyal subjects

of their heavenly King cry out, in the language of their ancient brethren to the Jewish Sanhedrim—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."¹ And, like those same heroic and unyielding men, when the arrogant high-priest assumed to exercise over them divine prerogatives, they, in the face of all usurpers, bravely presume to declare, and by acts to make good their declaration—"We ought to obey God, rather than men."²

And so, on the other hand, if the church, growing unmindful of its own proper sphere, and proper functions, trench upon the domain and the prerogatives of the state, as the church, (so called), has often done, all good Christians, as well as good citizens, cry out again—"We ought to obey God, rather than men!"—for, then, too, it is man commanding, and not God—man contravening the authority of the Most High; for the state, as we have

¹Acts iv. 19, 20. ²Acts v. 28.

said, as well as the church, is His institution. The powers that be, whether *civil* or *ecclesiastical*, are ordained of Him.¹

8. *The Essential Spirituality of the Church.*—The *spiritual* and the *carnal*, the *church* and the *world*, (the *poles* of religious thought and expression); are constantly contrasted in the Scriptures. The essential unworldliness of Christ's kingdom was foreshadowed in the Mosaic institutes, and foretold by all the prophets. When Christ himself came to set it up, He said—"My kingdom is not of this world."² He taught that all those who enter it, must be essentially and radically changed. To the Jewish ruler, He said—"Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God. * * That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."³ Addressing his disciples generally, he said—"Except ye *be converted*, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."⁴ The inspired writers constantly

¹Rom. xiii., 1. ²John xviii., 36. ³John iii., 3, 6.

⁴Matt. xviii., 3.

addressed and referred to their brethren as the "saints," the "sanctified," the "holy," the "spiritual." And so, too, the followers of those illustrious men were accustomed, with a sweet simplicity and touching pathos, to inscribe upon the resting-places of their brethren who had "fallen asleep," that most significant and pregnant word, inclusive of spirituality, as well as of all other Christian virtues—"Faithful!"

The men of the world, themselves, expect the church to be essentially different from, and better than the world; to be, indeed, *antipodal* to it; the world's opposite. However carnal themselves, they have no sincere respect for a church that is not spiritual, while, for one that is, they have the profoundest reverence.

When the spiritual standard of the church is low, men run away into skepticism and practical infidelity, and laugh its teachings and preachings to scorn. The lack of all true spirituality, on the part of the so-called church of Rome, it was, that caused the great brood of French infidels, whose baneful influence.

conspiring with other evils, culminated in that "horror of great darkness," which, in the last century, overspread and enshrouded "beautiful France," and made the naturally noble and splendidly-gifted French people—the *Greeks of modern times*—a nation of skeptics and of atheists. A similar lack of spirituality, on the part of the Lutheran church of Germany, it is, too, that has brought religious darkness, dearth, and death, upon that land of scholars and philosophers, and cursed it with that deceitful and deadly foe of Christianity, and of all vital godliness, that master device of the devil—in many aspects of it the very worst and most destructive form of infidelity—Rationalism, which arrogantly aspires to the discrowning, by human hands, of the King Eternal, Immortal and Invisible, the only wise God; to the *apotheosis* of human reason, and to the raising of a worm of the dust, to the throne of the Most High.

When, on the other hand, Christian spirituality is pure and elevated, the wicked tremble before it, as did the debauched and

infamous Roman procurator before the holy apostle of God, when he “preached of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.”

9. *The Proper Priesthood and Spiritual Equality of all Believers.*

(a) Their *priesthood*. Peter, addressing Christians generally, says—“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, *a holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Again—“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”¹ John, in the Apocalypse, speaking for all Christians, says—“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and *priests* unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.”²

Surely this language gives no place to any sacerdotal caste or hierarchy. None to

¹Pet. ii., 5, 9. ²Rev. i, 5, 6. See also Rev. v., 10; xx., 6.

spirual lordship and supremacy. It brings out, in bold relief, spiritual *individualism*—"living stones;" and yet a glorious spiritual *unity*, the unity of *homogeneousness*—"a spiritual house." It reveals a *living, working church*, as well as ministry; each member of the body filling his proper place; all "striving together for the faith of the gospel;" all "coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty;" the whole "sacramental host of God's elect," engaged in glorious warfare, lovingly and loyally *following* their appointed leaders, not coldly and selfishly *sending* them forth, to bear, alone, the whole brunt and burden of the battle.

(b) Their *equality*. When the disciples disputed among themselves, "which should be greatest?" Christ said unto them—"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors. But *ye shall not be so*: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.'¹ Again he said—"Be not ye

¹Luke xxii. 25, 26.

called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ, and *all ye are brethren.*"¹

No Christian, then, may ambitiously aspire to greater personal dignity or power than the humblest of his brethren. *In honor*, the people of God are all to *prefer one another.*² None may emulate Diotrophes, who "loved to have the pre-eminence."³ No one, *as inferior*, needs the good offices and mediation of another, *as superior*, in order to a gracious audience with God. "For there is one God, and *one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*"⁴

This priestly character of all God's people—every believer exercising sacerdotal functions, "offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ—is a matter of immense moment. How it honors the individual Christian! How it builds up and makes prosperous the church! How it evangelizes and blesses the world! What a revenue of glory does it bring in to God! It is impossible too highly to appreciate it. Alas! that it should

¹Matt. xxiii., 8. ²Rom. xii., 10; 1 Tim. v., 21.

³3 Jno. 9. ⁴1 Tim. ii. 5.

so often, and by so many, be disregarded. "We may call ourselves Protestants, or by any other name we please, but the restriction of the priesthood to the ministry, is the essential error of Popery. That system makes the minister the only priest—the only one to offer up the spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praise, keeping back the people from doing anything. And just as the old absolutists of Europe have placed that *sovereignty* in one man, which rightly belongs to the whole people, so it has devolved that *priesthood* upon the minister alone, which properly belongs to the whole church of Jesus Christ. The welfare of all Christian churches depends upon *all the professors of religion*; not devolving it upon saints, or priests, or ministers, to pray for them, but themselves praying and laboring all for the conversion of a world to Christ. Here lies the great strength of true Christian churches; not in the labors of the ministry alone, but of all the people. This multiplies power a thousand fold."¹

¹Prog. Bap. Princ., pp. 340, 341.

10. *The Essential Voluntariness of all True Religion.* God made man in His own image—*after his own likeness.* And one of the essential points of resemblance between the Divine Sire and the human son is—the possession of the power of free and unconstrained *self-action.* Though He may influence them, God never *coerces* the human intellect, or heart, or will. Man can turn to the right hand or to the left. He may serve God or Mammon. If, then, God does not *compel* man's spiritual service, does not *arbitrarily* impose religion, in any form, upon him, but gives him the widest and most unrestrained *freedom of choice*, surely his fellow-man may not do it—no priest, prelate, or pope; no church, or council.

11. *The Inefficacy without Faith of the so-called Sacraments.* The simple outward rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are possessed of no essential, intrinsic virtue, apart from the faith and spirituality, on the part of those who observe them, which they imply. Nay, so far from being beneficial, they are deeply injurious. Their salutary influence, like that of many natural agents, depends upon

properly prescribed conditions. A savor of life unto life, when rightly used, they are a savor of death unto death, when abused. It is sometimes said, with respect especially to the administration of the rite of baptism to infants, that "if it do no good, it can do no harm." But it ought to be remembered that there are no *neutral principles* in the universe. All are active, all are positive, and actually do good or harm, according as they are properly or improperly applied. The principle involved in the declaration of Jesus, "He that is not with me is against me," is of universal breadth. The act, whatever it be, that does not honor our Lord, dishonors Him. The act that does not promote the progress of His kingdom, obstructs and retards it. The act, whether secular or religious, that does not benefit him who performs it, or upon whom it is performed, (whether man or child), by a universal and irreversible law of nature and of God, harms him, harms all others with whom he is in any wise connected, and disturbs the harmony of God's government.

The simple natural sentiment, and the strong

common sense of men, revolt at the idea that any use of water, whether *much* or *little*, a drop or an ocean, any mere *bodily washing*, can *cleanse the soul*, remove the stains of guilt, overcome and destroy the native, deep-struck depravity of the heart, and make him who was spiritually polluted, pure; him who was unholy, holy. So, too, do the same sentiment and the same sense, revolt at the thought that any use of bread or wine, whether a crumb or a loaf, a drop or a gallon, has any magic spiritual power. They feel that he who is corrupt, when he approaches either the baptismal font, or the table of the Lord, will be—*without repentance for his sin, and faith in the great Deliverer from it*—corrupt when he leaves it; that he that is “filthy,” will be “filthy still.” Nature, (God in action and development), stronger than everything, is too strong for the sacramental theory. No metaphysical subtleties or sophistries can overcome its opposition.

But the word of God itself directly settles the matter. Paul, writing to the Romans, says—“He is not a Jew which is one

outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”¹ Writing to the Galatians, the same inspired apostle says—“In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”²

12. *Immersion the Rite of Initiation into the Church.* Baptism is a beautiful symbolic rite, rich in meaning, admirably adapted to enlist the attention of men, and powerfully to impress the popular heart. It represents most strikingly the cleansing of the soul, the washing away of its sins. It symbolizes the believer's death to sin, and his resurrection to newness and righteousness of life. It also symbolizes the death and burial of Jesus, and his resurrection from the tomb, and sets forth and keeps before his people, and the whole world, the glorious doctrine, that, as he conquered death, hell and the grave, and

¹Rom. ii. 28, 29. ²Gal. v. 6.

rose triumphant over them, so also shall all his people. Thus beautiful, yet solemn, simple, yet significant, no rite so impresses the popular heart. Its administration draws together great multitudes of earnest spectators. And, however the irreverent, and the profane, and the sacrilegious, may sometimes affect to ridicule it, the conviction is wrought upon all candid and dispassionate beholders, that it is divine—that it is the true and proper form of that heavenly rite to which Christ himself submitted, and which he requires of all, who, as his professed followers, would rightly “put Him on,” assume the appropriate outward insignia of discipleship, and enter by the proper portal, his visible church. God, in our day, endorses it as effectively, if not with the same outward demonstrations, as when, on the banks of the sacred river, thronged with the masses of “Jerusalem and all Judea,” his Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon Jesus, as he came up, all radiant and glorious, out of the baptismal waters, whilst the voice of the Father sublimely sounded out from Heaven—“This is

my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”¹

13. *Believers the only Proper Subjects of the Baptismal Rite.* This is another doctrine that carries the unbiased and unsophisticated popular mind. Men feel that it would be a *profanation* to administer this holy rite to the professedly unbelieving. And they equally feel that it is an *absurdity* to administer it to those who are incapable of faith, unable to comprehend the import of the ordinance, or intelligently and conscientiously to assume the duties and responsibilities which it imposes. All this they perceive and feel without any high degree of scriptural intelligence on their own part, or any elaborate argument on the part of their religious teachers. All that is requisite to carry their convictions is the statement of a few simple scriptural facts, the enforcement of a few simple scriptural principles, readily apprehended by all classes of mind, in connection with the simple scriptural administration of the heavenly rite.

¹Matt. iii. 16, 17.

These are the great and divine doctrines, which, in whole, need only to be announced, to unbiased and dispassionate men, in order to be acknowledged as divine. These are the doctrines whose heavenly principles and spirit alone can enfranchise the human mind and the human heart. They are the base on which rests the higher civilization, the purer morality, the fuller freedom of modern times. Having already effected so much, they are destined to effect yet vastly more, in emancipating the nations, as well as individual men, and in endowing them with all the blessings of the truest and the largest liberty.

The great body of the honest, truth-loving people, with a sure, unerring instinct of the true and the good, are quick to see and recognize their value. God, in revealing them, has adjusted them to those for whom they were designed. The people, in receiving them, do but make natural as well as grateful response to His wisdom and His love.

Surely, one would think that such principles, with their intrinsic worth and outward

power, should long since have swept in triumph through the world; and that those who have so firmly held and gallantly defended them throughout all the ages, should be the honored of the earth. Ah, no! Jesus held them. And He was crucified. The apostles held them. And they, too, were martyred. De Bruys, Lollard, Hubmeier and Tauber held them. And theirs was a similar fate.

Like many of the chief benefactors of their species, in other lines of life, the noblest witnesses for religious truth, have generally failed, (however appreciated by the humbler ranks of men,) of a true appreciation by the dominant powers of the world, and have often encountered from them the bitterest prejudice, and the cruelest persecution.

In our own day, and especially in our own country, thanks to the prevalence of these principles themselves, opposition to their most zealous and consistent advocates has been relieved of much of its harshness and severity. But, however modified and softened, it is still maintained on the part of many

from whom a far nobler spirit and policy might have been expected.

For this continued opposition to those who have deserved the highest commendation rather than censure, many reasons might be assigned. One of great weight, if it may not be ranked as the chief, is, misapprehension of the principle and spirit of their administration of the Christian ordinances, particularly that of the Lord's Supper. Through this misapprehension, a wide-spread and bitter outcry is raised against what is called their "close-communion"—(incongruous and distasteful compound, distilling drops of bitterness into the cup of sweets!)—an outcry utterly ungenerous and unjust. Their COMMUNION may be *strict*, but it is not *close*. It has a truly evangelic breadth and openness. They commune widely and freely, as we have seen, with all the followers of Jesus, in prayer, in praise, in efforts for the salvation of the perishing, in every lawful and laudable enterprise for the propagation of divine truth, and for the promotion of the divine glory. But their very love of the

truth, and of the ordinances, their very zeal for God's glory and for the spiritual welfare of men, as evinced by their unswerving devotion to such principles as we have mentioned, is a bar to their communion with anything and everything which they regard as inimical to those high and holy ends.

In other ages, and in less highly favored lands, as we have said, the strong hand of power was laid heavily upon them. They braved the cross, and the block, and the sword, and the gibbet, the dungeon, the rack, the wheel, the stake. Now, however, where sheer power and persecution cannot be brought to bear, other methods, prompted by a seemingly opposite spirit, have sometimes been adopted. The general mind aspires to great breadth of view, the general heart to great breadth of sympathy. The age, as has been said, is "in love with *liberality*"—and everything that affects its tones, or wears its guise, is appreciated and applauded; whilst everything, however true, and honest, and noble, that seems to differ from it, is reproached. Hence some, having, we fear, no true breadth

of view, no real breadth of sympathy, however much they may affect them, taking advantage of the scriptural strictness of administration of the ordinances of the gospel, particularly that of the sacred Supper, on the part of these *Strict Constructionists* of the Divine Constitution, seem anxious to fix upon them the odium of illiberality; and thus, by disparaging them, to retard the progress of their peculiar principles. Failing to carry the day in fair and open conflict, these partizans of error resort to stratagem. Everybody knows that the true issue, the real point of conflict, between them and their opponents, is *Baptism*. But these redoubtable warriors raise the siege of that stronghold, and strive by adroit manœuvres and skillful strategy to accomplish what could not be effected in the open field by main strength and actual prowess. Changing the seat of war, shifting the scenes of battle, they make feints against points of little or no importance, in the hope, by a covert attack, a disguised system of sapping and mining, of ultimately carrying the citadel itself.

And it must be confessed that these ingenious tactics have not been without effect. The general mind has been greatly confused and perverted. Many sincere lovers of truth have been led unwittingly into error. And many generous and magnanimous spirits have been so influenced as to withhold sympathy from those worthiest of it, while bestowing it upon the undeserving. Hence it is, in part, at least, that while the advocates of the great principles just now under review, have carried the argument from Scripture, and history, and scholarship, and constrained at least the partial acceptance of their doctrines, by not a few who once rejected them, they have not made the general and triumphant advance, in all directions, which they have deserved. Nay, while their *true* and *rightful* policy is the *aggressive*, they have often been led to assume the *defensive*.

Nothing, to-day, more interferes with their doctrinal and denominational success, nothing more obstructs the progress of their principles, than the unreasonable clamors so persistently raised against their *proper scriptural*

STRICTNESS *of administration* of our Lord's Memorial rite, as an unjust and illiberal "CLOSE-COMMUNION."

Unscriptural views of this great MEMORIAL ORDINANCE of our Lord, have more ministered to those unreasonable clamors, more stimulated and strengthened them, than almost any other cause whatever. Nothing, then, would more help to retrieve what has been lost, and to insure future progress, than to impress the popular mind with just conceptions of the real nature and design of the sacred Supper, and the proper position and true spirit to be assumed in respect to its administration. And we think it clear, in the light of all that we have said, that a most important advance, in that direction, would be made, by correcting the misapprehensions engendered and fostered by the common designation of the rite, as—*the Communion*.

And now, as the way to overcome evil, is to oppose good to it; the way to dispel darkness, to pour light upon it; the way to supplant error, to bring the truth against it;

we take occasion, seriously and earnestly to propose, that, if *the Lord's Supper* be not name enough for our Lord's Memorial ordinance; if we *must have another name* by which to designate it, that it be not, *the Communion*; but, a name equally beautiful and far more just, that of—*the Commemoration*.

In favor of this, rather than the other appellation, are, as we have seen, both reason and the word of God, as well as practical considerations of the highest value.



XXI.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY.

TO effect the substitution which we suggest will, we know, be difficult, if not impossible. Some will smile at our simplicity, wonder at our temerity, in making the proposition. But, however that may be, we put it forward, and in the boldest relief that we can give it.

The great misnomer against which we so strongly protest, was long in establishing itself. But it struck its roots deeply, and spread them widely, and has grown into grand proportions. And it may be that a similar lapse of time will be requisite to disestablish and uproot it. Yet not necessarily so. The giant oak of a thousand years, is often prostrated, in a moment, by the blast of heaven, and may be felled, in a few hours, by the well-directed strokes of human hands. And so may it be with this

deep-struck, wide-spread tree of error. Still, however sanguine, we can hardly hope it. It is a very tower of strength. It has been built up, and buttressed, and entrenched, and fortified, for more than half a score of centuries, by millions of cunning hands; and that will be a *strong* as well as cunning hand, that shall overthrow it. Thine, O God! alone can do it.

But, to speak humanly, and with less boldness of figure, this great misnomer is too completely ingrained, too deeply imbedded in our religious literature, too widely engrafted upon every species of writing, as well as of common speech, too completely naturalized, so to speak, in the general sentiment and sympathies of men, to be readily discarded and expelled. Writers of every name, and of every shade of doctrine, ancients and moderns, Papists and Protestants, Baptists and Pedobaptists, Calvinists and Arminians, have accepted and accredited it.

The greater part of that learned and able work, written some years since, by the late Dr. Curtis, in the interest of the general

Baptist view of the Lord's Supper, (and from which we have quoted two or three brief but valuable paragraphs), owes its origin to this egregious error; and, but for it, would not have learnedly and eloquently encumbered a perfectly plain and simple subject.

And this remark will apply to a number of similar treatises. Indeed, almost all the formal works of the Baptists, (as well as of others), upon this subject; their discussions in the periodical press, and their oral discussions, take shape and color from the same erroneous view. It will be hard for them, though the great misnomer has constantly stood in their way, and obstructed their progress, to yield their old ideas, and to alter their old methods, in respect to it; hard, in any degree, to discredit their own literary and theological offspring. Iconoclastic as they might be, under other circumstances, it were hardly wonderful if they hesitated to cast down and break the images themselves have raised.

But a much nobler principle than that of personal pride and self-appreciation, (carried too

far, and wrongly applied), may make them still, indirectly at least, countenance and strengthen the great error. Though our brethren have been so often spoken of as *radical*, they are eminently *conservative*. They are not “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.”¹ They are no light-minded, news-mongering Athenians, “spending their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.”² They have no affinity for new-fangled theories. They are no followers of “new men, studious of new things.” No! They “stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.”³ They are in love with the ancient gospel. They never weary of the “old, old story.” Whilst “all the world wondered” and wandered “after *the Beast*,”⁴ they never did it. Theirs it was, and is, and will ever be, as a people, a church—beloved and loving Spouse of Christ—to raise, amidst the loud and foul idolatrous conclamation, unceasing

¹Eph. iv. 14. ²Acts xvii. 21. ³Jer. vi. 16. ⁴Rev. xiii. 3.

counter-cry, and to shout to the wondering and the wandering—"Behold THE LAMB OF GOD!" O, Bride of the Lamb! radiant and beautiful! O, Woman of the Wilderness! thou comest up sublimely from thy long exile, "leaning upon thy Beloved,"¹ with this triumphant self-abnegating acclaim of thy *double-love*—love of thy Lord and love of thy children—heaving from thy swelling heart.

This very firmness and stability, this strong indisposition to change what once they have accepted, may make our brethren still patronize the great misnomer. They never recognized the main errors involved in that false name. Still, they have allowed, almost unchallenged, the word itself. They have not always borne in mind the wise and weighty adage which we have quoted, that "*words are THINGS*." Conservators of truth, let them not become conservators of error, even in a name. Let them be quick to disown and renounce it. Pride of *seeming consistency*; unwillingness, while so strenuously contending for the right, to *appear*, in anything, to have been *in the wrong*,

¹Rev. xii. Cant. viii. 5.

may influence them. But they who have done so many higher, ay, and harder things, surely can rise superior to this lower and less difficult one.

The misusage in question, from custom and fixed habit, has become so natural, and so convenient; is connected with so many delightful associations, so many sweet and cherished memories, and is therefore so dear, that it will, perhaps, seem to some not only unwise, but even a cruel violence, to disturb it.

Other ecclesiastical terms, however, employed in an unscriptural sense, pervade our literature, and are strongly entrenched in it. Yet Baptists, and some others, too, constantly protest against and assail the unscriptural usage in respect to them. For consistency's sake; for something dearer still—for truth's sake; for the sake of their dear Lord and his glorious kingdom among men, let them do the same thing in respect to the false usage of the term so unfortunately applied to the Lord's Supper. Though it be dear as a *right eye*, or a *right hand*, since *it offends*, let it be sacrificed.

If it be too firmly fixed in our theological and other literature, too strongly entrenched in the general mind, and common speech, to be dislodged from its strongholds, all possible and feasible means should be employed to counteract and neutralize the evils which it propagates and fosters.

And we make no doubt that that, at least, may be accomplished with respect to it, which has been achieved in respect to certain errors connected with the baptismal controversy. In defiance of genius and learning, wit and rhetoric, specious and subtle sophistry, worldly rank, and power, and wealth, and influence, the protest made against those errors has not been made in vain—as the state and tone of the popular mind as well as of general religious literature amply attest.

XXII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

IN concluding our dissertation, we take occasion to say, what, perhaps, we should have said before beginning it. It did not occur to us to write a *preface* to our little book. And perhaps it was well. In these rapid, rushing, busy times, if men read at all, they do not like to be detained a moment by explanations, on the threshold of a subject, and often “skip” them, and plunge *in medias res*. So our salutatory might have been of no avail. And, indeed, we are not without misgivings about the fate of our *inverted preface*, or valedictory. Whilst that may have been skipped, this may not be reached at all. Still, with an humble hope that the kind and courteous reader and ourselves may have gotten up enough *momentum* to take us through, we venture to make our statement. It is this :

We have always felt that the *scriptural strictness* observed by our brethren in the administration of the Lord's Supper, was *right*; and that opposition to it was a *mere prejudice*, resting upon *no proper principle* at all. And *if right*, we felt that it might be made *so to appear* to all fair-minded persons. The chief difficulty in the way of this, seemed to us not to lie so much in different views of the proper *priority of baptism to the Supper*, or of the proper *action* and real *substance* of the precedent ordinance, as in a *misapprehension* which pertinaciously connected itself with the great *essential* purpose of the Supper, and in prejudices thereby engendered.

All evangelical Christians concede in theory that *to commemorate Christ* in His sufferings and death for his people is *that grand essential purpose*. But, with that, many have connected, as *essential*, another object—that of *the mutual communion of believers*—(which is only, at most, *incidental*, and *infinitely inferior* to the main design); and have practically superseded the former idea by the latter.

If all this, with kindred truths, could be

properly shown, it was felt that the outcry against so-called "close-communion," would appear to be *absurd*, and should, therefore, be put to shame, and forever hushed. Hence this dissertation.

We trust that our work may be, in some humble degree, at least, useful to the righteous cause so zealously espoused and so bravely defended by those noble Christian people to whom we have, in previous sections, specially referred; and with whose principles and practice respecting the Lord's Supper we are in full accord and hearty sympathy. Their distinction and honor it has been, if not to make for Christ a conquest of the world, at least to hold for Him, through all the Christian ages, and against fearful odds, the citadels of truth. To hold them, is still their high and glorious mission.

That they appreciate this mission is manifest from the words of one of the ablest and most revered of their writers. He says—"One of the earliest corruptions of Christianity consisted in magnifying the importance of its ceremonies, and ascribing to them a saving

efficacy. With this superstitious reverence of outward forms, a tendency was introduced to corrupt these forms, and substitute ceremonies of human invention for the ordinances of God. To *restore these ordinances to their original purity*, and, at the same time, to *understand and teach that outward rites have no saving efficacy*, appears to be a service to which God has specially called the Baptists. We are often charged with attaching too much importance to immersion; but the notion that baptism possesses a sacramental efficacy finds no advocates in our ranks. It introduced infant baptism, and prevailed with it, and it still lingers among those by whom infant baptism is practiced. *Our principles*, by restricting baptism to those who are already regenerate, *subvert the doctrine of baptismal regeneration*, and exhibit the ceremony in its proper relation to experimental religion. To *give due prominence to spirituality, above all outward ceremony*, is an important service to which God has called our denomination.”¹

¹Dagg's Manual of Theology, Part II., p. 301.

May He whose prerogative it is to fire the heart with valor, and to nerve the arm with strength, make them equal to the arduous yet inspiring and sublime duty assigned them.

We also trust that what we have written, so far as it may be read, will be received with Christian charity and candor by such of our common Christian brotherhood as may not be agreed with us in the views which we have disclosed, and prove not altogether unacceptable and unprofitable to them. In what we have written—while widely differing from others—we have had towards them no spirit of hostility or of disparagement. We regard them as our brethren, the children of our common Father, the servants of our common Lord. We claim an interest in Luther and Melancthon, in Calvin and Knox, in Leighton and Hooker, in Whitfield and Wesley, in Edwards and Doddridge, in Heber and Chalmers; as well as in Menno and Tauber, Helwysse and Williams, Bunyan and Gill, Booth and Fuller, Hall and Foster, Carson and Haldane. They all alike held the great

saving truths of the gospel. They all alike did valiant service for those truths. We reverence them. We cherish their memory. The writings of many of them we hold among the richest treasures of our library. And we rejoice in believing that in no slight degree through their manifold labors and holy lives, there is a constant approximation towards a truer union and communion among all believers, and the realization in its fullness of the prayer of Jesus that his people, all, might be one as He and His Father are one—one in the truth, and in love of the truth; one in essential principle and spirit; one in aim and effort for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

Nothing within the range of our experience and observation more saddens our heart than exhibitions of a lack of such true unity, and the absence of that genuine Christian sympathy and brotherly love by which it is inspired and sustained.

In our day, as in all times, hostility to the gospel is wide-spread and intense. Many of the finest and most cultivated intellects of

the world are leading the cohorts of error, of infidelity, of atheism, with a vigor and audacity truly appalling. They are diffusing a double-distilled poison of skepticism throughout the most advanced nations of the world. They are misleading and corrupting the thought and the morals of the very flower of our youth. They are doing much to sap the foundations of all faith, and to inaugurate a universal reign of doubt—doubt, dark, dreary, and despairing; and so, hopelessly depraving and destructive. They have brought upon *the very masses* of the people, upon our cities and towns and rural districts, upon our families, upon our very churches, upon the ministers of the churches even, a very epidemic of unbelief and misbelief, and plunged, through blank and black despair, many bright intellects and naturally noble spirits into the awful gulf of “Pessimism” (teaching that all things are not ultimately for the best but for the worst) only less horrible than that of hell itself.

Oh! then, surely all the lovers of the truth, and of those who are dying for lack of it, should

“come up to the help of the Lord against the Mighty;” against that “God of this World” who “hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”¹ Oh! surely all the sons of God, led by His Spirit, the Spirit of truth, should rally to that “standard” which—now that the great “Enemy,” the Father of Lies, has “come in like a flood”—the blessed “Spirit,” flying to the rescue, is “uplifting against him,”² and help to stay the tide of death and desolation.

Ah! these divisions and sub-divisions of God’s people!—this breaking and disintegrating of “the pillar and ground of the truth”—this exhaustion of strength in mutual conflicts over issues that involve no principle, but only prejudice blind and unreasoning—these are the things that stay the final and complete triumph of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Never will that triumph be accomplished, while these conflicts and divisions last. It

¹2 Cor. iv. 4. ²Is. lix. 19

is only when they have ceased, that the glorious Spouse of Christ, as Solomon sings of her, shall "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners;"¹ and that to her, as Queen of earth, and Queen of heaven, all shall make obeisance.

That unity of his people for which Jesus prayed, is *necessary* to the conversion of the world. Without it, the world *will not* believe. With it, the faith of the world *shall be compelled*. This is implied in the words of Jesus, when, in his intercessory supplication for his people just before he suffered, he thus besought his Father—"That they all *may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us—that *the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*"²

The exhibition of such unity, which no human legislation or philosophy, no earthly power at all, has been able to effect, will be a demonstration to the world of the

¹Song of Sol., vi. 10. ²Jno. xvii. 21.

divinity of the Power that can and does effect it; a demonstration that will convince the *judgment* of men, that will *carry the intellect* of the world. Carrying the intellect, that unity will, too, by its beauty and amiability, *carry the heart* of the world; for every one, however cold, and selfish, and unloving, responds to the words of the Psalmist—"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"¹ Further still—this unity will develop in the church a power invincible, irresistible, that shall go forth "conquering and to conquer;" that shall "triumph in every place" over all opposition; till, to Him who wields it, through his people, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess."²

Then, and not till then, shall the vision of the seer of the Apocalypse be realized. There will be heard great voices in heaven saying—"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."³ And

¹Ps. cxxxiii. 1 ²Rom. xiv. 11. ³Is. xlv. 23; Eph. ii. 10.

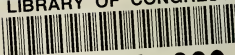
all the voices of earth like the sound of many waters gladly and triumphantly responding shall say—*Amen!*

Oh, let us, then, be one! Let us sweetly and broadly “commune” with each other, (always, however, in *accordance* with the *law* of Christ,) “in every good word and work,” and not cramp our fellowship by a test, that is no test; and which our divine Lord has never imposed upon his people or his churches. Ours be the motto so honorable to the heart that inspired it—“In things *essential*, unity; in things *indifferent*, liberty; in *all things*, charity.”

Finally—and above all—let us say that we would venture humbly to hope that our work may be acceptable to our divine Lord; and that, by his blessing upon it, it may be promotive of a better understanding and a worthier observance of his holy ORDINANCE OF COMMEMORATION.

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